



LONDON- WEST MIDLANDS ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT

Volume 5 | Technical Appendices

CFA14 | Newton Purcell to Brackley

Baseline report (CH-001-014)

Cultural heritage

November 2013

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Department for Transport

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1 Introduction

1.1 Structure of the cultural heritage appendices

1.1.1 The cultural heritage appendices for the Newton Purcell to Brackley community forum area (CFA14) comprise:

- baseline reports (this appendix);
- a gazetteer of heritage assets (Volume 5: Appendix CH-002-014);
- an impact assessment (Volume 5: Appendix CH-003-014); and
- survey reports (Volume 5: Appendix CH-004-014).

1.1.2 Maps referred to throughout the cultural heritage appendices are contained in the Volume 5, Cultural Heritage Map Book.

1.2 Content and scope

1.2.1 This baseline provides the evidence base against which the assessment of assets that may be affected by the Proposed Scheme can be determined. It contains information about known and potential heritage assets from a variety of sources and presents a chronological description and discussion of the development of the study area, placing assets within their historical and archaeological context.

1.3 Study area

1.3.1 The Newton Purcell to Brackley study area lies within the Aylesbury Vale District of Buckinghamshire, the Cherwell District of Oxfordshire and the South Northamptonshire District of Northamptonshire. The study area comprises parts of the civil parishes of Barton Hartshorn, Newton Purcell with Shelswell, Finmere, Mixbury, Evenley, Westbury, Turweston, Brackley, Whitfield and Radstone.

1.3.2 All non-designated and designated assets within the land required for construction of the Proposed Scheme and within 500m of it have been detailed in this baseline assessment. In addition, designated heritage assets have been examined within the zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV).

1.3.3 All identified assets are listed in Volume 5: Appendix CH-002-014 listed under unique reference numbers in the format NPB001 and shown on Maps CH-01-043b to CH-01-047a and CH-02-023 to CH-02-024 in Volume 5, Cultural Heritage Map Book.

1.4 Data sources

1.4.1 Sources examined as part of this baseline assessment include published secondary sources, cartographic sources, historic environment record (HER) data for non-designated heritage assets and English Heritage National Heritage List (NHL) data for designated assets. A full list of published sources can be found in Section 9 of this appendix.

1.5 Surveys undertaken

1.5.1 The following surveys were undertaken as part of the environmental impact assessment (EIA) process:

- light imaging, detection and ranging (LiDAR) survey of the majority of the Proposed Scheme and land around it (see Volume 5: Appendix CH-004-014);
- hyperspectral survey of the majority of the land around the Proposed Scheme (see Volume 5: Appendix CH-004-014); and
- a programme of non-intrusive surveys including geophysical prospection and fieldwalking (see Volume 5: Appendix CH-004-014);

2 Geology, topography and landform

2.1.1 The Newton Purcell to Brackley study area flanks the upper valley of the River Great Ouse, which drains eastward. The study area lies within the watershed between the catchments of the River Great Ouse to the east, the River Tove flowing towards the River Nene to the north-east and the River Cherwell to the north and west leading to the River Thames to the south-west.

2.1.2 Newton Purcell lies on the northern flank of one of the headwater valleys of the Padbury Brook, the ground rising onto a plateau as the route passes Mixbury. At Mixbury a shallow tributary valley extends north-east to meet the River Great Ouse near Westbury.

2.1.3 North of Mixbury, the valley of the River Great Ouse loops from a north to south alignment as it passes Brackley to a west to east alignment. Westbury lies on the southern edge of the salient caused by this loop and Turweston on the north-east edge. The route crosses the valley of the River Great Ouse between Mixbury and Westbury then crosses the salient between Mixbury and Westbury before re-crossing the valley again north of Turweston onto the plateau between Brackley and Greatworth. Tributary valleys feed into the valley of the River Great Ouse near Foxhill Spinney, at Ilets Farm and at Radstone to the north of Brackley.

2.1.4 The area is generally characterised by limestone plateau land, dissected by the valley of the River Great Ouse.

2.1.5 The underlying geology comprises limestones, mudstones and sandstones of Jurassic date; these outcrop in series on the valley sides of the River Great Ouse with mudstones and sandstones of the Rutland and Horsehay formations towards the valley floor overlain by White Limestone with the Forest Marble, Taynton Limestone and Blisworth Limestone forming the adjacent plateau lands. The limestones of this plateau are predominantly overlain by superficial glaciofluvial and till deposits of Pleistocene date. The glaciofluvial deposits are typically sands and gravels.

2.1.6 Glacial Head deposits are also found on the upper slopes of the valley of the River Great Ouse to the north of Mixbury; this location aside, the valley sides and immediate periphery are devoid of cover by superficial drift deposits. It is possible that

erosion on the plateau land and valley sides of the River Great Ouse and tributary streams will have resulted in deposition of slope-wash/colluvium on lower slopes and within the valley floors. Alluvium is also present in the valley floors and to the north of Turweston this alluvium is known to include peat.

- 2.1.7 The geology of the area generally favours the identification of sites through cropmarks visible to aerial photography. Northamptonshire has been part of English Heritage's National Mapping Programme and cropmark sites are relatively well represented on the Northamptonshire side of the River Great Ouse, especially where limestones outcrop and are not covered in till.
- 2.1.8 The present settlement character is predominantly one of rural settlement focussed on the nucleated villages and hamlets of Newton Purcell, Finmere, Mixbury, Westbury, Turweston and Whitfield. The town of Brackley lies at the midpoint of the study area.
- 2.1.9 Human activity through all periods in the study area has largely been concentrated in the principal valley systems, specifically within and immediately adjacent to the valley of the River Great Ouse. The River Great Ouse could have been used as a natural corridor for movement along its length, but also have formed a natural boundary. The valley of the River Great Ouse would also have provided significant resources from the riparian environment. As an area of watershed, the higher ground may also have provided access between the valley system of the River Great Ouse and those of the River Tove (feeding to the River Nene) and the River Cherwell (feeding to the River Thames).
- 2.1.10 Within the valley of the River Great Ouse and its tributaries there will be a potential for waterlogged and other deposits of palaeoenvironmental interest. Archaeological deposits may also be relatively deeply buried in these localities by the build up of alluvium (and peat) in the valley floors and colluvium on the lower slopes.

3 Archaeological and historical background

3.1.1 This section provides a chronological overview of the archaeological evidence within the study area. This baseline review forms a contextualisation within which individual assets can be considered. Descriptions of all archaeological assets, whether designated or not, which lie wholly or partially within land required for construction of the Proposed Scheme, or within 500m of the edge of this land, are contained in Gazetteer in Volume 5: Appendix CH-002-014. These assets are mapped on Maps CH-01-044 to CH-01-047 and CH-02-023 to CH-02-024 (Volume 5, Cultural Heritage Map Book). The Gazetteer also considers all designated archaeological assets within the ZTV. The Gazetteer entries include assessments of significance where appropriate.

3.2 Early prehistory (circa 500,000 - 1,500 BC)

3.2.1 The known Palaeolithic resource within the study area is closely related to the superficial (drift) geology and the depositional processes which formed it. These depositional processes are closely associated with climatic conditions and in particular climatic oscillations, during which large parts of the British landscape was covered by ice sheets, punctuated by relatively short-lived interglacials when climatic and erosional conditions were similar to those today¹. During the Anglian Glaciation circa 480 – 420,000 years ago, an ice cap reached as far south as parts of Buckinghamshire and the outskirts of modern London. South of this ice cap was a landscape of tundra, dissected by vast braided rivers.

3.2.2 The Lower and Middle Palaeolithic periods witnessed the first appearance of early hominins circa 500,000 years ago, and the appearance of anatomically modern humans around 40,000 years ago. This arrival of anatomically modern humans defines the beginning of the Upper Palaeolithic. Evidence for Palaeolithic hominin and human activity is informed by the presence of stone tools and far less commonly, by organic remains, such as butchered bones, wooden tools and palaeoenvironmental remains. The majority of such finds derive from fluvial sands and gravels².

3.2.3 Human activity throughout this period is characterised by small bands of hunter gatherers exploiting resources generally within a tundra landscape. In so doing they seldom established long term sites, although sites have been identified that were possibly used as seasonal hunting camps.

3.2.4 Human activity throughout the Palaeolithic, if present at all in this area, is likely to have been concentrated on lighter soils on higher ground adjacent to, or within, the River Great Ouse Valley or its tributaries. Such locations would have been attractive to early hominins and human populations seeking to exploit the resources available across a range of habitats and environments.

¹ Silva, B. & Farr, L., (2010), *Earliest Buckinghamshire*. In: An Illustrated History of Early Buckinghamshire, Ed. M., Farley. Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society: Aylesbury.

² Silva, B., (2008), *An Archaeological Resource Assessment of the Lower and Middle Palaeolithic in Buckinghamshire. Prepared for the Solent-Thames Research Framework Resource Assessment: The Lower / Middle Palaeolithic Period*, Oxford Archaeology, Oxford.

3.2.5 The study area lies outside of the south-eastern zone in Britain in which Palaeolithic remains are usually found. It is, therefore, unlikely that any Palaeolithic (circa 500,000 – 10,000 BC) activity will be represented although there remains a possibility, especially on the margins of the River Great Ouse and its tributaries.

3.2.6 The Mesolithic period (circa 10,000 - 4,000 BC) begins with the end of the last glaciation and retreat of the ice sheets from Britain. For the earlier part of this period Britain was still attached to continental Europe by a plain extending across the North Sea; as the ice sheets melted this became flooded severing the connection. Following the end of the last glaciation there was a period of rapid warming lasting from circa 9,500 to 6,900 BC during which the landscape of Southern Britain became dominated by woodland of juniper, pine and birch. This was followed by a period from circa 6,900 BC during which a climate broadly comparable to today's became established and with it the development of extensive deciduous woodland dominated by oak and hazel with alder carr developing in wetlands and river valleys³.

3.2.7 Human activity throughout this period continues to be characterised by small bands of hunter gatherers exploiting resources within a predominantly woodland landscape. There is increasing evidence that long term seasonal and even semi-permanent sites were established from which the resources of a region could be exploited. Towards the end of the Mesolithic there is some evidence for small scale exploitation of clearings for a limited amount of horticulture and potentially management of woodlands through deliberate clearance by fire to create improved hunting grounds⁴.

3.2.8 Evidence for Mesolithic activity is usually restricted to scatters of bone, flint and other stone artefacts present within ploughsoil and subsoil. During the latter part of the Mesolithic there is also evidence that crudely fired pottery was also coming into use⁵. The location of these scatters can provide information on routes being used to access natural resources and the location of seasonal working and camping sites. Typically Mesolithic activity is identified where well drained soils cover upper slopes above watercourses. Locations on higher ground, and especially on low lying ridges, at a woodland edge would have provided a good location from which to watch for and hunt game. Routes along river valleys and prominent ridge lines/escarpments would also likely have been used to move between different hunting territories and resource zones. The upper slopes of the valley of the River Great Ouse would therefore be a typical location to find evidence for Mesolithic activity. Few finds of Mesolithic date have to date been recorded within the study area (not mapped as single findspots), although programmes of archaeological investigation, including fieldwalking, at Evenley just outside the study area recorded quantities of Mesolithic finds that are more indicative of settlement or working activities⁶.

3.2.9 The Neolithic period (circa 4,000 - 2,400 BC) sees the import to Britain of domesticated animals including sheep and cattle and the increasing use of

³Sidell, J, Wilkinson, K & Cameron N., (2000), *The Holocene Evolution of the London Thames*, MOLAS Monograph 5, Museum of London, London.

⁴ Simmons, I., (1996), *The Environmental Impact of Later Mesolithic Cultures: Creation of Moorland Landscape in England and Wales*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh.

⁵ Mithen, S., (1994), *The Mesolithic Age in the Oxford Illustrated Prehistory of Europe*. Oxford University Press. Oxford.

⁶ Northamptonshire Historic Environment Record.

domesticated wheat and new styles of pottery as well as evidence for relatively long distance trade contact to source raw materials. This period also sees an increasing importance placed on the treatment of the dead with burials and ritual sites becoming an important facet of the archaeological record.

3.2.10 The emphasis on ritual and the increased clearance of woodland suggests an increasing population with an associated development of an intra-communal society. By the beginning of the Bronze Age there is evidence for the development of an increasingly hierarchical society with higher status individuals being buried (often with grave goods) within round barrows. This development can often be related to the introduction of a new pottery style (Beakers) and the introduction of metalworking of copper, gold and bronze.

3.2.11 There remains no clear evidence for widespread clearance of woodland for arable cultivation during the Neolithic period and it is likely that Neolithic populations continued to follow a broadly nomadic life but clearing woodland glades to improve hunting, establish small areas of horticulture and to pasture herds/flocks.

3.2.12 Neolithic settlement activity appears to be at best episodic and can often be identified by the deposition of middens containing food refuse and pottery⁷. Typically such evidence is found on slopes overlooking watercourses as was usual during the Mesolithic period⁸.

3.2.13 Settlement evidence of later Neolithic and Early Bronze Age date typically comprise the buried remains of shallow pits or scrapes and burnt mounds (piles of fire cracked stone/pebble with charcoal). Much evidence for the Neolithic and Early Bronze Age periods may have been lost through slope erosion or buried under later colluvium.

3.2.14 Few recorded finds of Neolithic or Early Bronze Age finds have been made in the study area (not mapped as isolated findspots), although the programmes of archaeological investigation, including fieldwalking, in the Evenley area (just outside of the study area) demonstrate that Neolithic activity and potentially settlement was present in this area⁹.

3.2.15 A number of long-barrows are known to lie near the headwaters of the River Cherwell indicating that Neolithic ceremonial/burial activity may be expected on the upland areas within the watershed between the River Cherwell and River Great Ouse. In Northamptonshire the oval mortuary enclosure with a barrow is more usual¹⁰.

3.2.16 Compared with the Thames Valley to the south and west round barrows typical of a later Neolithic (circa 3,000 – 2,400 BC) and Early Bronze Age date are relatively rare in the northern Buckinghamshire and West Northamptonshire region. Often these burial/ceremonial monuments have been ploughed away leaving only the buried remains of their ring ditches which can be detected as cropmarks on aerial

⁷ Allen T., Barclay, A. & Lamdin-Whymark, H., (2004), *Opening the wood, making the land. The study of a Neolithic landscape in the Dorney Area of the Middle Thames Valley*. In *Towards a New Stone Age*, Oxford Archaeology, Oxford.

⁸ Hey, G. and Barclay A., (2007), *The Thames Valley in the fifth and early fourth millennium cal BC: The appearance of domestication and the evidence for change*, Proceedings of the British Academy 144, London.

⁹ Northamptonshire Historic Environment Record.

¹⁰ Chapman A., (2004), *The Monument Builders: The Neolithic and Bronze Ages*. In: Tingle M. (ed), Northamptonshire Archaeological Society, Northampton.

photographs. Typically these monuments occupy prominent positions on upper slopes overlooking valleys, although smaller examples can also be found within valleys.

3.2.17 Early Bronze Age (circa 2,400 - 1,500 BC) round barrows may reasonably be expected to be present on the crest of slopes overlooking valley systems and examples have been identified near Barleyfields (NPB014); to the west of the Great Central railway near Finmere Quarry (NPB019), and overlooking the River Great Ouse to the south of Turweston (NPB051).

Early Bronze Age cremations, some within urns were recorded during investigations at Finmere Quarry (NPB-A-006), although no barrows or associated settlement appeared to be present¹¹.

3.3 Later prehistory (circa 1,500 BC - AD 43)

3.3.1 The Middle Bronze Age (circa 1,500 - 1,100 BC) through to the Late Iron Age (circa 400 BC – AD 43) is the period during which settlement and the associated evidence for agricultural practices and land division becomes more visible in the archaeological record.

3.3.2 From the Middle Bronze Age settlement became more permanent; usually as single farmsteads only large enough to accommodate a single family unit¹². A typical later prehistoric settlement may include buried evidence for at least one roundhouse in the form of a circular gully with postholes and associated features such as an enclosure ditch, ditched fields, paddocks and trackways.

3.3.3 Larger scale societal divisions may well have been present but are not clear cut until the introduction of tribal coinages in the late 1st century BC. There is little evidence for any centralisation in the Late Bronze Age (circa 1,100 - 700 BC) and Early Iron Age (circa 700 BC - 400 BC) except for a number of hillforts on the margins of the Northamptonshire Limestone uplands to the north of Brackley. In the Late Iron Age the study area may have lain in a border area between three tribal groupings: the Catevalauni to the south and south-east, Corieltauvi to the north and north-east and the Dobunni to the south-west¹³.

3.3.4 Activity of Late Bronze Age to Early Iron Age date will typically be located on the lighter free draining soils over the permeable limestones where these outcrop on the valley sides of the River Great Ouse. It is likely that activity of these periods will not be as well represented in areas where the limestone is overlain by deposits of till, but may favour areas where superficial glaciofluvial deposits of sand and gravel occur.

3.3.5 From the Middle Iron Age (circa 400 - 100 BC) onwards it is possible that more marginal land over clayey soils was brought into agricultural use. A rare example of Middle Iron Age settlement has been identified to the north of Brackley Fields

¹¹ Hart, J, Kenyon, D and Mudd, A. (et al), (2010), *Excavation of early Bronze Age Cremations and a Later Iron Age Settlement at Finmere Quarry, North-East Oxfordshire*, Oxoniensia LXXV, Oxford.

¹² Kidd, A., (2009), *Buckinghamshire Late Bronze Age and Iron Age: Historic Environment Resource Assessment*, Buckinghamshire County Council website.

¹³ Cunliffe, B., (2009), *Iron Age Communities in Britain*. 4th Ed, Routledge, London.

(NPB076) and excavated evidence for settlement activity of later prehistoric date is also clearly represented at Finmere Quarry (NPB019), at Brackley Town Field (NPB074) and near Sundale (NPB073). Cropmarks suggestive of late prehistoric and/or Romano-British settlement are also evident on the margins of the valley of the River Great Ouse to the south of Turweston (NPB059), near Versions Farm (NPB068); east of Fox Covert (NPB 077); north of Fox Covert (NPB085), at Lower Radstone (NPB087), at Radstone (NPB088 and 089) and to the north-west of Radstone (NPB090). A number of isolated enclosures (NPB014, 015, 016 and 020) are also visible as cropmarks on the dipslope between Newton Purcell and the valley of the River Great Ouse. These may represent later prehistoric colonisation of more marginal soils over till. Similar evidence for Middle to Late Iron Age colonisation on the Cotswold dipslope may have been identified from aerial survey of other parts of North Oxfordshire¹⁴. Geophysical survey of the area around Sundal and Illets Farm (NPB073) (Volume 5: Appendix CH-004-014 (GOoAF)) identified further features to the west of the A43 that although probably representing Romano-British activity could also include later prehistoric features.

3.3.6 At Finmere Quarry (NPB019) an Iron Age settlement comprised the remains of a linear settlement of roundhouses with associated enclosures and pits. It was posited that this settlement may have been located on the edge of the drift deposits of glaciofluvial gravel and sands in this area¹⁵.

3.4 Romano-British (AD43 - 410)

3.4.1 Settlement of Roman (AD 43 - 410) date is usually more extensive in scale than that of later prehistoric date, with a far greater variety of material culture (such as pottery, worked bone, metalwork and glass). There is also widespread use of stone, brick and tile for building.

3.4.2 Generally there appears to be an increase in population and settlement density between the 1st century BC and 1st century AD, although there is some evidence during this period for settlement abandonment and dislocation.

3.4.3 Major re-organisation of the countryside occurred throughout the 1st century BC to 2nd century AD. The changes from the second half of the 1st century AD may have been a consequence of the establishment of the Roman road network and the growth of both large towns and more localised market centres.

3.4.4 Abandonment of settlement locations appears to be widespread from the 2nd century AD. This may reflect a fundamental re-organisation of the countryside with evidence for differential development marked by the establishment of villas. This re-organisation was radical and allowed the support of a growing and complex pattern of urban settlement for the next 200 years and possibly beyond. Evidence for this dislocation appears to be represented in the excavated evidence from investigations on the A43 road improvements north of Brackley (NPB074, NPB073 and NPB072)¹⁶

¹⁴ Featherstone R & Bewley, B., (2000), *Recent Aerial Reconnaissance in North Oxfordshire*, Oxoniensia LXV, Oxford.

¹⁵ Hart, J, Kenyon, D. and Mudd, A. (et al), (2010).

¹⁶ Mudd, A., (2007), *Iron Age and Roman Settlement on the Northamptonshire Uplands: Archaeological work on the A43 Towcester to M40 Road Improvement scheme in Northamptonshire and Oxfordshire*, Northamptonshire Archaeology Monograph No. 1, Northamptonshire Archaeology.

and at Finmere Quarry (NPBo19)¹⁷ where settlements occupied during the Iron Age are abandoned or move during the 1st century AD.

3.4.5 Newton Purcell lies on the line of the Roman road (NPBoo6) that links the Roman Conquest period fort and later town at Alchester near Bicester to the south (Margary route 160a)¹⁸ with the town at Towcester (*Lactodurum*) and the junction with the Watling Street to the north. No excavated evidence for this road has yet been discovered although a linear bank has been identified on the road's presumed line to the east of Newton Purcell (Volume 5: Appendix CH-004-014 (No1)). A Roman road such as this will have been a major focus for settlement activity. It is believed that there may have been a small Roman town or roadside settlement at Brackley overlooking a crossing of the River Great Ouse and much Romano-British material has been recovered from within the town and to the south around Evenley just outside the study area. Excavated evidence for Romano-British activity has been identified at Finmere Quarry (NPBo19); to the south of Turweston (NPBo59); near Sundale on the A43 (NPBo73); and at Brackley Old Town Field (NPBo74). The excavated evidence at Finmere Quarry included a Romano-British trackway.

3.4.6 Near Sundale (NPBo73) archaeological excavations uncovered the eastern periphery of what is very possibly a Romano-British temple¹⁹. Geophysical survey (Volume 5: Appendix CH-004-014 (GOoAF)) of the area to the west of the A43 clearly shows a characteristic square enclosure typical of such a site as well as other features typical of late prehistoric and Romano-British settlement and agricultural activity.

3.4.7 The area where Northamptonshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire meet may have been one in which iron was extracted from local ore and processed²⁰. A seemingly substantive smelting site may have lain at Ashton approximately 5km to the north-east of Brackley. Ashton may also have been the location of a local pottery industry during the Roman period. Further iron working sites have possibly been identified within the area of Salcey Forest just to the north of the study area.

3.4.8 Compared with the Gloucestershire and Oxfordshire Cotswolds to the south and west and the Nene Valley to the north and east, villas are comparatively poorly represented in western Northamptonshire and north Buckinghamshire. Recent research in West Northamptonshire, however, involving community metal detection and artefact detection surveys suggests that villas are maybe more widespread in this area than previously believed²¹.

3.5 Early medieval (AD410 - 1066)

3.5.1 Understanding what was occurring in the 5th to 7th centuries AD is very challenging. Material culture is drastically reduced as handmade Anglo-Saxon pottery does not

¹⁷ Hart, J., Kenyon, D. and Mudd, A. (et al), (2010).

¹⁸ Margary, ID., (1973), *Roman Roads in Britain*, J Baker, London.

¹⁹ Mudd, A., (2007).

²⁰ Schrufer-Kolb, (1999), *Roman iron production in the East Midlands, England*. In: Young, S., Pollard, A. Budd, P. & Ixer R. (Eds), British Archaeological Reports, Oxford.

²¹ Young, S., Pers Comm, 2012.

survive well in ploughsoils and coinage is only present reliably from circa AD 700 and even then is very rare.

3.5.2 It is apparent that the social, monetary, economic and political organisation of the Roman period broke down to be replaced by a system of smaller tribal entities that came to adopt customs, social organisation, material culture, stylistic forms and language of a new elite derived from northern Europe and Scandinavia. The period appears to have been unsettled and warlike as these entities strove for power until the principal Anglo-Saxon kingdoms of East Anglia, Mercia, and Wessex became established. The study area lies in an area over which by the 8th to 9th centuries Mercia held sway.

3.5.3 Much of the evidence for the 5th to 7th centuries comes from cemeteries, although place names can also be a very useful indicator of settlement activity of this period. Cemeteries of this period are often sited on prominent points in the landscape and it is not unusual to find them associated with prehistoric barrows. Some Romano-British cemeteries also continue in use into the earlier part of this period, suggesting that even if Romano-British settlement sites were not continuing in use, that settlement was still focussed close to them.

3.5.4 Settlement of 5th to 7th century date tends to be scattered and based on small hamlets/farmsteads usually focussed on a small number of small timber halls with associated sunken-featured buildings. These settlements may also be associated with small ditched fields and trackways and often exist close to former more nucleated Romano-British occupations and may represent a shifting and scattering of settlement rather than complete abandonment. There is, however, evidence to indicate that areas on lighter, easily tilled soils near water sources were favoured and that areas of intractable clay soils were abandoned for occupation but may have continued in use for timber and wood pasture. Settlement activity of this date is therefore most likely to be identified on the lighter soils over the limestones where they are not covered in till. Activity may also be identified within the valley of the River Great Ouse.

3.5.5 From the 7th century onwards the archaeological record becomes clearer as documentary sources become available and the evidence from buried artefactual and structural remains more robust. This period also sees the widespread introduction of Christianity across the region and associated church foundations, many of which remain the locations of existing churches. From the 8th century it is evident that political power was becoming more centralised with the exertion of chartered rights and the establishment of significant royal and episcopal holdings.

3.5.6 Before AD 873 the study area lay within part of the Anglian Kingdom of Mercia until its collapse during the Danish invasions of the 9th century; thereafter until circa AD 1016 it lay within a border area between Wessex with its territory expanding from the Thames valley to the south and south-west, and the Danelaw to the north and east. Artefacts dating between circa AD 750 – 950 have been recovered from within or close to modern settlements within the area where Northamptonshire meets Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire. This suggests that the modern settlement pattern has its origins between the 9th and 11th centuries. Finds of this date have also been

made in and around Turweston (NPB058). The establishment of larger market centres is also apparent, including (most likely) a settlement at Brackley focussed on an oval enclosure associated with the Church of St Peter in the part of the town called Old Town (NPB056).

3.5.7 Between the 9th and 11th centuries there was a greater nucleation of settlement, generally in the locations of villages that have remained populated through to the present day. The later part of this period may also have seen the fragmentation of the larger estates typical of the 8th to 10th centuries into the smaller manorial units that became the framework around which land tenure was organised throughout the following medieval period.

3.5.8 This period also saw the establishment of the open field agricultural system with its characteristic ridge and furrow which would remain in use throughout the medieval period. These open fields were worked communally with farmers owning and/or renting individual portions/strips within each of the open fields. The study area contains a mixture of nucleated villages with large open field systems typical of the Midland counties and known as "champion landscape" adjacent to the valley of the River Great Ouse and a more dispersed pattern of smaller hamlets and farmsteads, especially on more marginal soils over till between Newton Purcell and Mixbury.

3.6 Medieval (AD 1066 - 1539)

3.6.1 The manorial system with its associated agricultural system based on the communal working of associated open fields had become established before the Norman Conquest (AD 1066) and remained the norm throughout the medieval period. The centuries following the Conquest also witnessed fundamental changes in rulership, local government, commerce, technology and the related organisation of society. During this period there was also at first a rapid growth in population through the 11th to 13th centuries followed by a grievous check in population due to a succession of crop failures causing poor harvests and consequently famine. These were closely followed by the outbreak of the Great Plague in 1347, which may have killed approximately one third of the population. Further outbreaks of plague occurred throughout the later 14th and 15th centuries.

3.6.2 The Norman Conquest saw the establishment of an entirely new Royal dynasty and the apportionment of the manors of England to William the Conqueror's military elite and their families. Significant holdings also continued to be held by the church, with further additions being bequeathed to both church and the new monasteries by kings, aristocracy and emerging mercantile gentry throughout the period. By the 15th century church and monasteries were the landlords of a very significant proportion of England and were major employers and entrepreneurs.

3.6.3 The Norman Conquest saw the imposition of the feudal system, labour was cheap and tied to the land and aristocratic and ecclesiastical landlords had significant power to manage and organise their holdings. Both the crown and major landholders developed vast areas of countryside as hunting preserves for the rearing of deer and other game. These forests included Bernwood Forest to the south of the study area and the forests of Salcey and Whittlewood that may have extended into the northern

part of the study area. These forests were not necessarily wooded but were called forest as they were administered under the regulations of the Forest Statutes. From the late 12th century crown and major magnates also increasingly sought to improve their incomes through the establishment of market centres, often in conjunction with the establishment of new planned settlements or re-organisation of existing ones. This period also saw significant investment in new technologies such as improved watermills and the introduction of windmills to Britain.

3.6.4 The rising population throughout the 12th and 13th centuries may have resulted in the uptake of more marginal land helped by the introduction of the mould board plough and later the replacement of ox teams by horses to pull them. This colonisation of more marginal clays and clearance (assarting) of woodland and waste on the periphery of established settlements can also be identified.

3.6.5 The famines and plagues of the 14th century seem to have brought an end to the uptake of more marginal land and may also in great part have been responsible for the abandonment of many sites both in more marginal areas and elsewhere. The dramatic decline in population was not the only reason for the abandonment and shrinkage of rural settlement. Changes in agricultural practices and associated shifts in the rural economy to improve rents from land and lordly incomes from farming had major implications for the fabric of rural society and were also significant reasons for the abandonment of settlements. This shift witnessed the widespread abandonment of the traditional communal farming system and introduction of less labour intensive methods, including a dramatic increase in the amount of land that was given over to pasture for sheep (to provide wool that had become one of England's principal and most profitable exports) and to a lesser extent cattle (to feed the burgeoning urban populations). This shift also witnessed the decline of the feudal system with a peasantry generally tied to a particular manor and the establishment of a more mobile rural workforce. This period also saw the rise of the farming yeomanry that by the 15th century could be seen to be becoming a newly gentrified class.

3.6.6 Evidence for medieval activity in the study area comprises the buried remains of moated enclosures and other low earthworks, or buried remains, including evidence for house platforms, hollow-ways, trackways and ditched and/or banked field boundaries. Remains of former open field systems associated with nearby settlement can also survive as areas of ridge and furrow and the intervening headlands.

3.6.7 By time of the Norman Conquest the present settlement pattern had probably developed, focussed on the settlements at Newton Purcell (NPB007 and 008), Finmere (NPB011), Mixbury (NPB024), Westbury (NPB042), Turweston (NPB058), Whitfield (NPB071) and the small town at Brackley. Medieval activity is also clearly represented at Mixbury by the scheduled monument of a Norman motte and bailey castle of Beaumont Castle (NPB025). There is a moated site at Newton Purcell (NPB007) and deserted or shrunken settlements at Fulwell (NPB029), Lower Radstone (NPB087) and Upper Radstone (NPB089). With the exception of Fulwell, these abandoned settlements lie on more marginal soils overlying till. Relatively well preserved ridge and furrow is present to the north of Newton Purcell (NPB092) and around Barleyfields Farm (NPB093), to the west of Westbury (NPB044), near Grovehill Farm (NPB098) and around Turweston (NPB060, 061, 062 and 099).

3.6.8 LiDAR imaging and aerial photography also suggests that lynchets are present on the upper slopes of the valley of the River Great Ouse to the north-west of Turweston (NPB100). Features, including what may be leats (NPB063 and NPBo66), are also visible within the valley floor of the River Great Ouse as it passes Turweston. These may be the remains of a water management system for the mill at Turweston and/or have been to manage water within seasonal meadows.

3.7 Post-medieval (1539 - 1900)

3.7.1 The pattern of settlement established in the medieval period forms the basis for the pattern that continued through the post-medieval period (1539 – 1900) to the present day.

3.7.2 The character of post-medieval settlement evidence is one in which surviving built structures are more prevalent, although buried evidence similar to that of medieval date but typically with a greater quantity and variety of artefactual evidence will still be present as buried evidence.

3.7.3 The post-medieval period also witnessed the widespread abandonment of the medieval agricultural organisation based on open fields with its ridge and furrow strips divided by headlands. This was replaced by enclosed fields, both for arable production and to provide enclosed pasture. The enclosure of the landscape commenced in the later medieval period and accelerated after the final dissolution of the monasteries under Henry VIII between 1536 and 1539, which brought more land into private ownership.

3.7.4 Much of the area is now characterised by a fieldscape formed by parliamentary enclosure with scattered farmsteads necessitated by the change from scattered communal holdings within an open field system to concentrated private holdings. Many of the farmhouses and associated agricultural buildings in the area were built between the 17th and 19th centuries as a response to this agricultural change. There is some evidence in the form of earthworks to indicate that management of water for meadow was occurring within the floodplain of the River Great Ouse (NPB063 and 066). At Mixbury (NPB024) a new estate village with common housing stock was created in the 1870s.

3.7.5 Re-organisation of the countryside was accompanied by an associated change in labour division. A lower proportion of the rapidly expanding population could be employed on the land while the demands of industry and commerce led to a burgeoning urban population. Brackley continued to be a relatively important market centre. New markets for the agricultural produce of the Brackley area were opened up by the improvement of roads in the late 18th and 19th centuries and the construction of the railways providing a fast link to both London and the industrial heartland of the Midlands. The late 19th and early 20th centuries saw the construction of the London and North Western Railway (NPBo03) and GCR (NPBo03 and NPBo75) through the study area. The latter had a station (NPBo04) at Newton Purcell called Finmere for Buckingham. These railways were closed in the 1950s - 60s.

3.8 Twentieth century/modern (1900 - present)

- 3.8.1 During World War II the airfield at Turweston (NPB054) was established on the higher ground overlooking the valley of the River Great Ouse. Parts of this airfield's perimeter infrastructure may encroach within the land required to construct the Proposed Scheme.
- 3.8.2 Modern residential development has occurred in and around all of the villages within the study area as well as at Brackley. Many of the farmsteads shown on the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping such as Widmore Farm (NPB018) have also expanded with the building of large agricultural barns, sheds and other outbuildings.

4 Built heritage

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 This section provides baseline information relating to built heritage assets within the land required for construction of the Proposed Scheme, 500m study area and wider ZTV. This section provides the following information:

- descriptions of all built heritage assets or asset groupings wholly or partially within the land required for construction of the Proposed Scheme. This includes descriptions of settlements where relevant;
- descriptions of all built heritage assets or asset groupings wholly or partially within 500m of the edge of the land required for construction of the Proposed Scheme. This includes descriptions of settlements where relevant; and
- descriptions of selected designated assets within the ZTV.

4.1.2 A broad overview of the character and form of the settlement pattern within the study area can be found in Section 6 of this appendix.

4.1.3 Further information on all these assets, plus those other designated assets which lie within the ZTV but are not described in Section 4.4 of this appendix, can be found in the Gazetteer (Volume 5: Appendix CH-002-014). The assets are mapped on maps CH-01-44 to CH-01-47, and CH-02-023 to CH-02-024 (Volume 5, Map Book).

4.2 Built heritage assets within the land required, temporarily and permanently, for construction of the Proposed Scheme

4.2.1 The following built heritage assets or asset groupings, both designated and non-designated, lie wholly or partially within the land required, temporarily and permanently, for construction of the Proposed Scheme. The assets are described from south to north.

Great Central Railway (NPBoo3 and 004)

4.2.2 The Great Central Railway (GCR) was the last of the great Victorian mainline railway projects and was opened in 1899 to link London, with a terminus at Marylebone, to Sheffield via Leicester and Nottingham.

4.2.3 The GCR had a junction at Quainton Road where it initially linked with the Metropolitan Railway and a junction at Woodford Halse where it linked with the East and West Junction Railway (later the Stratford and Midland Junction Railway). Slightly to the north of this was a third junction linking to the Banbury Branch of the Great Central Railway. Due to dissensions with the Metropolitan Railway, the link with the Metropolitan Railway at Quainton Road was bypassed in 1906 by the construction of a new link between Grendon Underwood and Ashendon to create the Great Central Joint Railway.

4.2.4 When first built the GCR was constructed to a very advanced standard with very few steep gradients and sweeping curves to facilitate high speed traffic. The line was also

designed with connection to the continent in mind and with a view to future expansion. To this end (and unlike the other great Victorian mainline railways) the structures on the line including bridges and platforms were constructed to accommodate the larger loading gauge prevalent on the continent with a long view towards connection to Europe via a channel tunnel. Stations were also built to a standardised design as islands between the tracks in order that the track could be moved away from platforms and/or extra track could be added if and when necessary²².

4.2.5 The GCR from its inception had difficulty competing with the existing large railway conglomerates, especially in attracting passenger traffic. The GCR did however develop a niche for moving rich business passengers on fast luxurious trains, effectively creating Britain's first long distance commuter line. At Newton Purcell the use of a slip carriage that was de-coupled without stopping the train meant that commuters could still alight without recourse to the main body of an express being required to stop²³. The GCR also developed strongly as a route for moving freight²⁴.

4.2.6 The financial crisis and poor relations with Europe engendered by World War I and its conclusion put paid to GCR hopes for a European connection and channel tunnel. Under the 1923 Railway Grouping Act the GCR became subsumed within the London and North Eastern Railway. Duplicating services already available via both the London and North Eastern Railway and London Midland and Scottish the former line of the GCR did not prosper. As freight transport by rail declined after World War II the line became increasingly neglected, especially after nationalisation in 1948.

4.2.7 Traffic on the former GCR was run down during the early 1960s, with most local and branch line passenger services being cancelled in 1963 with closure of many rural stations. Mainline services were also heavily curtailed with trains running beyond Nottingham being cancelled in 1960 and the service between London and Nottingham reduced to a mere three rather pedestrian services per day²⁵.

4.2.8 Due to its duplication of effort with the mainline services of both the Eastern and Midland Regions of British Rail, the GCR was an easy target for the closures planned by Dr Richard Beeching as part of his railway review: the Aylesbury to Rugby section of the GCR was closed in 1966.

4.2.9 To the north of the village of Newton Purcell lies the line of the former Great Central Joint Railway and the location of Finmere Station, built in 1899. The station incorporated a siding, a small goods yard with shed, cattle pens and livestock market. The station was closed in 1963 with the goods yard closing in 1964 and the line itself being closed in 1966. The old line of the railway is still carried over the A4421 by a pair of steel plate girder bridges. A bricked up arch between the bridge sections suggests that a tunnel lies under the station on the north side of the road; this may be goods access to the station and/or a storage area. The station, which lay to the west of the road, has been demolished although the station master's house remains beside the

²² Healy, J., (1987), *Echoes of the Great Central*. Oxford Publishing Company. Oxford.

²³ Davies R. & Grant M., (1984), *Forgotten Railways: Chilterns and Cotswolds*, David St John Thomas, Newton Abbot.

²⁴ Healy, J., (1987).

²⁵ Davies R. & Grant M., (1984).

road. The station house and bridges are all of a utilitarian design and in no way unusual examples of a common theme in railway architecture dating between the late 19th and mid 20th century; they are not designated. The station house has also been much altered in recent years.

Illets Farm (NPB070)

4.2.10 Illets Farm (NPB070) is a post-medieval farm complex beside the A43. The principal feature is a farmhouse and ancillary barns/stables set around a courtyard beside the A43. To the north of this lies a series of modern agricultural sheds. The setting of the farmhouse and associated buildings around the courtyard is internalised by a shelterbelt to the south and east and by the agricultural sheds to the north.

4.2.11 The value of this asset lies almost entirely in the historical and architectural interest inherent in the built fabric, character, appearance and coherence of the farmhouse and associated barns/stables around their courtyard. The farmhouse is an interesting local example of post-enclosure farm architecture. The setting is mainly confined to the immediate grounds and is entirely constrained to the south-east by the A43.

4.3 Built heritage assets within 500m of the land required, temporarily and permanently, for construction of the Proposed Scheme

4.3.1 The following built heritage assets or asset groupings, both designated and non-designated, lie wholly or partially within 500m of the land required, temporarily and permanently, for construction of the Proposed Scheme. The assets are described from south to north.

Barleyfields Farm (NP005)

4.3.2 Barleyfields Farm (NP005) comprises a farmstead with farmhouse and brick outbuildings set within a low walled farmyard enclosure. The principal elevations of the farmhouse face to the north and south with the front elevation facing south. Views in this direction are constrained somewhat by a small copse.

4.3.3 The principal value of this asset lies in the historical and architectural interest inherent in the built fabric, appearance and character of the farmhouse and its association with the other buildings that comprise the farmstead. This is an interesting local example of a post-enclosure farm complex and its location within an agricultural landscape contributes to its value.

4.3.4 The presence of a railway line passing approximately 150m to the south of the farmstead can be considered to be an integral part of its post-medieval character. The farmstead lies adjacent to the busy A4421.

Newton Purcell (NPBoo8)

4.3.5 Newton Purcell (NPBoo8) is a village that was probably established between 1086 and 1279²⁶ and lies adjacent to the main road leading from Oxford, via Bicester, to Buckingham and Northampton. The village contains eight Grade II listed buildings.

4.3.6 The settlement occupies a spur of slightly higher ground and is somewhat spread out along the A4421, which may have its origin as a Roman road linking Alchester near Bicester to the south with Towcester to the north. This is now a relatively busy route that passes on the east side of the village centre. The village centre around the church and Elms Farmhouse is slightly offset from this road.

4.3.7 The village is relatively isolated in what may formerly have lain within the northernmost part of the royal hunting forest of Bernwood. The village is surrounded by gently undulating farmland. No enclosure map for Newton Purcell exists although terriers (written land survey) indicate that the strip medieval fields survived until 1679²⁷. Enclosure was therefore probably undertaken privately at the turn of the 17th and 18th centuries.

The rural hinterland of the village is a construct of post-medieval private enclosure although elements of ridge and furrow survive to the north-east of the village and many of the local field boundaries date to the 17th century when the parish was enclosed. There has probably been little change in the nature of the local land division since at least the turn of the 19th century.

4.3.8 The busy A4421 dominates the eastern edge of the settlement with almost constant noise from passing traffic

4.3.9 The value of Newton Purcell lies primarily in the historical and architectural interest inherent in the built fabric, character and appearance of the historic buildings that form the core of the settlement, their interrelationship and their relationship with the surrounding agricultural landscape which has developed alongside the settlement.

4.3.10 Buried archaeology associated with both the putative Roman road and the development of the village during the medieval and earlier post-medieval periods will contribute to this value to a greater extent than its setting.

Barleyfields Barn Farm (NPBoo9)

4.3.11 Barleyfields Barn Farm (NPBoo9) includes a farmhouse with outbuildings that lie isolated within agricultural land to the north of Newton Purcell. The farmstead remains part of a farming concern and its isolated agricultural location defines its setting.

4.3.12 Ridge and furrow can be seen in the fields especially to the west of the farmstead which can probably be associated with the medieval open field system attached to Newton Purcell.

²⁶ Lobel, M.(Ed), (1959), *Victoria County History: A History of the County of Oxford: Vol. 6*. Victoria County History. London.

²⁷ Lobel, D.(Ed), (1959).

4.3.13 This is an interesting local example of a post-enclosure farm complex. The principal value of this asset lies in the historical and architectural interest inherent in the built fabric, appearance and character of the buildings that make up the farmstead, their interrelationship and their relationship with the agricultural landscape in which they are isolated and which has developed alongside them.

4.3.14 The local agricultural landscape is a construct of post-medieval private enclosure although elements of ridge and furrow survive around the farmstead. Many of the local field boundaries probably date to the 17th century enclosure of the parish.

4.3.15 The presence of a railway approximately 200m to the east of the farmstead can be considered to be a facet of its modern character.

Widmore Farm (NPBo18)

4.3.16 Widmore Farm (NPBo18) is focussed around a Grade II listed building comprising two brick cottages that have been conjoined to create the current farmhouse. The cottages are likely to have been built in the early years of the 19th century and post-date enclosure.

4.3.17 The farmhouse is aligned approximately east-west and its principal view lies to the south. To the north lies the farmyard with modern barn and to the west the woodland of Widmore Plantation, which had become established by 1885 when it is shown on the 1st Edition OS map. To the east are arable fields and the former line of the Great Central Joint Railway; to the east of this is Finmere Quarry.

4.3.18 This is an interesting example of post-enclosure agricultural cottages that have been combined into a single dwelling at the focus of a farmstead. The principal attribution of value to Widmore Farm lies in the historical and architectural interest inherent in the built fabric, character and appearance of the farmhouse and that of its outbuildings that lie within its grounds, their interrelationship and their relationship with the agricultural landscape in which they lie and have developed alongside.

4.3.19 The predominantly agricultural landscape in which the farmhouse lies is a construct of post-medieval parliamentary enclosure. There has evidently been little change in the nature of the local land division immediately around the farmhouse since at least the turn of the 19th-century. The construction of the GCR and the development of the quarry at Finmere in the 20th century have altered the aspect to the east.

Warren Farm (NPBo21)

4.3.20 Warren Farm (NPBo21) appears to have been a sizeable farmstead set around a central farmyard. The front elevation of the farmhouse faces to the south although views from the house are foreshortened in this direction by an enclosing shelter-belt. A shelterbelt also constrains views to the south-west and west. The most open views from the complex lie to the north-west and to the east.

4.3.21 A driveway approaches the farmhouse from the south passing through what appears to have been a formally designed meadow flanked by a shelterbelt. This driveway can

be considered to be the principal aspect to and from the house as it is the route that would have been used by guests. The size and arrangement of this farm around a large central courtyard suggest that it may have been set up as a model farm after enclosure or at the very least as an important estate/home farm.

4.3.22 This is an interesting local example of a post-enclosure farm complex. The principal attribution of value to Warren Farm lies in the historical and architectural interest inherent in the built fabric, character, arrangement and appearance of the buildings that form the complex, their interrelationship and their relationship with the agricultural landscape in which they lie and which has developed alongside them.

4.3.23 The predominantly agricultural landscape in which the farmhouse lies is a result of post-medieval parliamentary enclosure. There has evidently been little change in the nature of the local land division immediately around the farmhouse since at least the turn of the 19th century. The busy A421 passes approximately 250m to the south.

Mixbury Lodge Farm (NPBo22)

4.3.24 Mixbury Lodge Farm (NPBo22) is focussed around a Grade II listed farmhouse of 17th century date with 19th and 20th century additions. The farmhouse is built in the local limestone vernacular with ironstone dressing.

4.3.25 The farmhouse remains the focus of a farming concern and lies isolated within farmland between Finmere and Mixbury. Modern agricultural buildings are located in an L shape to the east and south of the farmhouse and a high stone wall and/or hedging further screens the eastern edge of the farmstead.

4.3.26 This is an interesting example of a farmhouse that may be associated with relatively early post medieval enclosure and that has since developed as the focus of a post-enclosure farmstead. The principal attribution of value to Mixbury Lodge Farm lies in the historical and architectural interest inherent in the built fabric, character, arrangement and appearance of the buildings that form the complex, their interrelationship and their relationship with the agricultural landscape in which they lie and which has developed alongside them.

4.3.27 The important part of the setting can be considered to be restricted to within the area enclosed by farm buildings and a perimeter wall.

Mixbury (NPBo24 and NPBo25)

4.3.28 Mixbury is a village situated on the plateau land to the south of the meander in the River Great Ouse as it flows past Brackley.

4.3.29 A settlement at Mixbury existed before the Norman Conquest, as it is recorded in the Domesday Survey of 1086 when it was held by Roger d'Ivry. It is possible that the scheduled monument of an earthen fortification (NPBo25), comprising possibly two conjoined baileys, is Roger d'Ivry's castle at Mixbury. By the 13th century Mixbury had

passed at least in part to the St Valery family and Beaumont may have been the principal seat of their honour²⁸. In 1194 Richard I established the area between Mixbury and Brackley as one of the only five licensed tournament grounds in England where the chivalry of England could legally practice their puissance at arms through tourneying; this tournament ground was still being used for horse racing in the 17th century²⁹.

- 4.3.30 The Church of All Saints is located opposite Beaumont Castle and contains fabric dating to as early as the 12th century in the chancel and nave, with 13th century additions. Significant alterations were subsequently undertaken in the 1840s.
- 4.3.31 The medieval open fields around Mixbury were enclosed in 1730 and by the time that Davis surveyed Oxfordshire in 1797 the settlement appears to have been concentrated around the stream that now flows to the north of the settlement³⁰. In 1874 the dilapidated houses of the village were replaced by order of the Court of Chancery by the uniform estate house style housing stock that now flanks the main street.
- 4.3.32 Mixbury is surrounded by agricultural fields, predominantly arable, established by parliamentary enclosure in 1730. A number of hedged closes, paddocks and gardens are present backing onto the main street and particularly around the rectory, church and scheduled monument of Beaumont Castle on the east side of the settlement. The ground slopes away from Beaumont Castle to both the east and the north. Views outward from the main village street and the church are greatly restricted by these closes.
- 4.3.33 The principal value attributed to Mixbury lies in the historical and architectural interest inherent in the quality of the built fabric of the buildings, and the character, appearance, coherence and historical integrity of the settlement, particularly the uniform and non-designated estate houses of 1870s date that flank the main street. These are an interesting study in Victorian social and philanthropic housing and social engineering.
- 4.3.34 The predominantly agricultural landscape in which Mixbury lies is a construct of post-medieval Parliamentary enclosure. There has evidently been little change in the nature of the local land division immediately around the settlement since at least 1800 and likely since enclosure in 1730.
- 4.3.35 The only surviving elements of the medieval landscape at Mixbury are the scheduled monument of Beaumont Castle and the Church of All Saints. Beaumont Castle cannot be publically accessed and is predominantly hidden within woodland while the Church of All Saints lies within a tree hedged enclosure that effectively isolates it from the rest of the settlement and surrounding countryside.
- 4.3.36 Mixbury is relatively isolated in an agricultural area and there is very little disturbance to the local sound environment.

²⁸ Lobel, M. (Ed), (1959).

²⁹ Keen, M., (1996), *Nobles, Knights and Men-at-Arms in the Middle Ages*, Continuum, London.

³⁰ Lobel, M. (Ed), (1959).

Glebe Farm (NPBo26)

4.3.37 Glebe Farm (NPBo26) comprises of a post-medieval farmhouse that is located to the south-east of a large modern riding stable complex. The principal front elevation of the house lies on its south-western side. To the north-east is pasture and the wider setting on this side can be considered to end at the former line of the GCR, which must be considered as part of the historical setting of the farmhouse.

4.3.38 The house is an interesting local example of a post-enclosure farmhouse. The principal value of this asset lies in the historical and architectural interest inherent in the built fabric, appearance and character of the farmstead and its relationship with the agricultural landscape in which it lies and which has developed alongside it.

4.3.39 The principal front elevation of the house is on its south-western side. To the north-east is pasture and the wider setting on this side can be considered to end at the former line of the GCR, which must be considered as part of the historical setting from the farmhouse.

Hollow Barn (NPBo27)

4.3.40 Hollow Barn (NPBo27) is a post-medieval barn built in the local limestone vernacular.

4.3.41 The value of this asset lies almost entirely in the historical and architectural interest inherent in its built fabric, character and appearance although its isolated rural location within an agricultural landscape contributes to this value.

Grovehill Barn (NPBo45)

4.3.42 Grovehill Barn (NPBo45) is a grouping of four large post-medieval barns/sheds. The principal elevation of the main barn lies to the south with shelterbelt screening close to the north.

4.3.43 The value of this asset lies almost entirely in the historical and architectural interest inherent in its built fabric, character and appearance and can mainly be viewed to be constrained to the yards around which the buildings are arranged. The association with the farmhouse at Grovehill Farm to the north is also important although masked by a shelterbelt. The connection to the surrounding agricultural landscape which has developed alongside it also adds to the value.

Grovehill Farm (NPBo46)

4.3.44 Grovehill Farm (NPBo46) is focussed around a post-medieval farmhouse set within a relatively wooded enclosure. Hedging and shelterbelt screens views to the east. Views from the farmhouse are therefore mainly internalised to its immediate grounds.

4.3.45 The value of this asset lies almost entirely in the historical and architectural interest inherent in its built fabric, character and appearance as a post-enclosure farmstead although its isolated rural location within an agricultural landscape contributes to this value.

Grove Farm (NPBo48)

4.3.46 Grove Farm (NPBo48) is focussed around a post-medieval farmhouse set within a hedged enclosure. The setting of the farmhouse is therefore internalised to its immediate grounds. A very large modern barn complex is situated immediately to the north-west.

4.3.47 The value of this asset lies almost entirely in the historical and architectural interest inherent in its built fabric, character and appearance as a post-enclosure farmstead although its isolated rural location within an agricultural landscape contributes to this value.

Oatley's Farm (NPBo52)

4.3.48 Oatley's Farm (NPBo52) is focussed around a post-medieval farmhouse orientated with its front elevation to the south. Hedging and shelterbelt mainly enclose the farmhouse on all but the eastern side which internalises its setting to its immediate grounds. A complex of barns and other ancillary buildings is located immediately to the north-west.

4.3.49 The value of this asset lies almost entirely in the historical and architectural interest inherent in its built fabric, character and appearance as a post-enclosure farmstead although its isolated rural location within an agricultural landscape contributes to this value.

Westbury (NPBo42)

4.3.50 Westbury (NPBo42) is a village situated on the plateau land to the north of the meander in the River Great Ouse as it flows past Brackley. A settlement at Westbury existed before the Norman Conquest as it is recorded in the Domesday Survey of 1086 as being held by the thegn Alnod Cilt during the Confessor's reign. At Domesday it was held by Bishop Odo of Bayeux, brother to William the Conqueror but probably held in tenancy from Odo by Roger d'Ivry, who also held the neighbouring manor at Mixbury. Like Mixbury, Westbury later became part of the honour of St Valery.

4.3.51 A single mill is recorded at Westbury by Domesday; this mill is believed to lie in the south-eastern section of the parish. Four acres (1.6 ha) of parkland are recorded at Westbury in 1279³¹; it is unclear where this may be located but it could be within the current grounds of Beachborough School on the south-west margin of the settlement. Some evidence for the medieval open field system survives as faint earthworks of ridge and furrow in the surrounding fields, especially on the western margins of the settlement.

4.3.52 St Augustine's Church is Grade II* listed and contains some 13th century fabric, although it is predominantly 14th century with 19th century restoration. The church lies to the south of the village centre on ground rising above the River Great Ouse,

³¹ Page, W., (1927), *The Victoria County History of the County of Buckingham. Volume IV – Ashendon Hundred*, Victoria County History, London.

which loops to the south. The church lies within an enclosure demarcated by a thick tree hedge which secludes it from its environs.

4.3.53 Apart from the church, the built heritage of Westbury is post-medieval in date and includes a number of 17th century cottages and a 17th century vicarage that are built in the local stone vernacular. Nine of these buildings, including the vicarage, are Grade II listed.

4.3.54 A watermill is recorded at Westbury in the 17th century; this second mill may have stood on the site of the current mill building that stands at the western edge of Westbury on the River Great Ouse³². This mill building dates to the early 19th century and although not designated, it can be considered to be a heritage asset of at least local importance with good views across the floodplain of the River Great Ouse to the west and south-west.

4.3.55 The predominantly agricultural landscape in which Westbury lies is a construct of post-medieval parliamentary enclosure. There has evidently been little change in the nature of the local land division immediately around the settlement since at least 1800 and probably since enclosure in 1764.

4.3.56 Some survival of the medieval landscape is evident in the form of the ridge and furrow, which survives to the west of the village.

4.3.57 The principal value of Westbury lies in the historical and architectural interest inherent in the quality of the built fabric, coherence, historical legibility, character and appearance of the settlement. This is recognised in its designation as a conservation area, the presence of the Grade II* listed Church of St Augustine, nine Grade II listed buildings and further non-designated vernacular buildings and features including a designed landscape of local historical interest.

4.3.58 The conservation area description³³ for Westbury notes the village's relative seclusion and how views within it are one of enclosure. No key views into or out of the settlement are noted.

4.3.59 The topography to the west and north-west of the village rises, effectively blocking sightlines in this direction. To the south the woodland around St Augustine's Church and Beachborough School effectively blocks views into and out of the village. The only open view is from the south-west margin of the village where Westbury Mill stands; here there is an open view to the south-west across the valley of the River Great Ouse. Within the village centre views are very much internalised to the local streetscape.

4.3.60 Westbury is a relatively peaceful village although some traffic noise from the A422 which passes immediately to the north of the village and from the Brackley Bypass is evident.

³² Page, W., (1927).

³³ Aylesbury Vale District Council: Westbury Conservation Area Description.

Turweston (NPB058)

4.3.61 Turweston (NPB058) is a village located on the edge of the plateau land contained within the meander of the River Great Ouse as it flows past Brackley. A settlement at Turweston existed before the Norman Conquest, as it is recorded in the Domesday Survey of 1086 as being held by Edward the Confessor's chamberlain Wenesi before the Conquest. At Domesday it was held by William de Fougeres. A mill is recorded at Turweston in Domesday and is believed to be situated in the locality of the current Turweston Mill on the north-western periphery of the settlement. Some evidence for the medieval open field system survives as faint earthworks of ridge and furrow in the surrounding fields, especially on the eastern margin of the settlement.

4.3.62 St Mary's Church is Grade II* listed and contains some 12th century fabric, although it is predominantly 13th and 14th century in date with 19th century restoration. The church lies to the west of the village centre on ground rising above the River Great Ouse, which passes to the west. The church lies within an enclosure demarcated by a thick tree hedge which secludes it from its environs.

4.3.63 Apart from the church, the built heritage of Turweston is post-medieval in date and includes a number of 17th century buildings including the Grade II* listed Turweston House. Turweston House has a formal series of gardens and parkland extending west across the valley of the River Great Ouse. This landscape includes an avenue extending westward which defines the key view for the house. Walled formal and kitchen gardens lie to the north of the house. The park and gardens are screened by a shelter belt of mature trees on all sides.

4.3.64 Turweston Manor, on the northern periphery of the village, also has a formal garden lying to its north and west. This is partly walled and screened to the north by a shelterbelt of mature trees.

4.3.65 The predominantly agricultural landscape in which Turweston is situated is a result of post-medieval parliamentary Enclosure. There has evidently been little change in the nature of the local land division since enclosure in 1813.

4.3.66 The Enclosure map of 1813 depicts a number of water features within the valley floor of the River Great Ouse to the west of Turweston House and to the east of Turweston Mill; these are still extant and are likely to be part of a system of manorial fishponds. The 1st Edition OS map of 1883 also indicates the presence of meads lying in the valley floor to the north of Turweston Mill.

4.3.67 Some survival of the medieval landscape is also evident in the form of the ridge and furrow.

4.3.68 The principal value of Turweston lies in the historical and architectural interest inherent in the quality of the built fabric, character, appearance, coherence and historical legibility of the settlement. This can be recognised in its designation as a conservation area; the presence of the Grade II* listed Church of St Mary, the Grade II* listed Turweston House and 16 Grade II listed buildings as well as further non-designated vernacular buildings and features including designed landscapes of local

historic interest associated with Turweston House, Turweston Manor and Oatley's Hall.

4.3.69 Buried archaeology associated with the development of the settlement through the medieval and post-medieval periods will also contribute to this value.

4.3.70 The village centre is very secluded and comprises a number of walled and hedged closes, which internalise views. Views outwards from the village centre are extremely restricted.

4.3.71 The topography to the east and north-east of the village rises, effectively blocking sightlines in this direction. To the west the relatively steep and well wooded valley of the River Great Ouse restricts views into and out of the village. The parkland here has a key view extending westward from Turweston House and extended on the opposite bank of the River Great Ouse by an avenue. The parkland is, however, screened from the outside by a well-established shelterbelt of mature trees.

4.3.72 A key view noted in the conservation area description³⁴ is the view south towards the village from the valley floor of the River Great Ouse, taking in Turweston Mill. Turweston is also a peaceful village although some traffic noise from the Brackley bypass is evident.

Versions Farm (NPBo69)

4.3.73 Versions Farm (NPBo69) is a large former farmstead with a large farmhouse set to the south of a former farm/stableyard with a cluster of outbuildings, barns and stables. Gardens lie to the south of the farmhouse and extend to its east. A shelterbelt encloses the farmstead, thickest on its western side. The principal view from the farmhouse is to the south with views eastward constrained by a shelterbelt. There may be a designed formalised driveway with avenue trees approaching the farmhouse from the south. The setting of the remaining buildings are internalised around the farm/stable yard.

4.3.74 The value of this asset lies almost entirely in the historical and architectural interest inherent in its built fabric, character and appearance. It is an interesting local example of a post-enclosure farm complex and its rural location within an agricultural landscape contributes to its value.

4.3.75 The setting is mainly confined to the immediate grounds although the house can be viewed as having a designed view to the south. The farm is a stud and the association with the practice race course to the north-east can also be considered to contribute to the value.

Hall Farm (NPBo84)

4.3.76 Hall Farm (NPBo84) is a farm complex focussed on a post-medieval farmhouse. The farmhouse is located to the south of the complex with a farmyard and agricultural

³⁴ Aylesbury Vale District Council. Turweston Conservation Area Description.

buildings to its immediate north. Further large agricultural sheds lie to the west. The front elevation of the farmhouse lies to the south and its key views must be considered to lie in this direction. The farm is recorded as Hill Farm on the 1st Edition OS map of 1884.

4.3.77 Hall Farm is an interesting local example of a post-enclosure farmstead. The value of this asset lies almost entirely in the historical and architectural interest inherent in its built fabric, character and appearance although its isolated rural location within an agricultural landscape contributes to this value.

Upper Radstone (NPBo89)

4.3.78 Upper Radstone (NPBo89) is a shrunken settlement on the plateau of higher ground to the north-west of Brackley.

4.3.79 Radstone is recorded in the Domesday Book as being held by Eskil during the reign of Edward the Confessor. In 1086 Radstone was held by Robert of Rhuddlan for the Earl of Chester. The earliest surviving fabric of St Lawrence's Church is 12th century in date with 13th and 14th century additions and 19th century restoration.

4.3.80 Radstone was significantly more populous during the medieval period, but appears to have undergone a period of prolonged decline during the later medieval and earlier post-medieval period. This may have been caused by the settlement failing to maintain economic vitality due to the decline of nearby Brackley as a market centre compared with its 13th century heyday³⁵.

4.3.81 Radstone appears to have had two foci during the medieval period that have survived relatively unchanged to the present day. Upper Radstone with the church and manor was probably the primary focus of the settlement, but extensive village earthworks and fishponds at Lower Radstone (NPBo87) attest to significant activity also being present in this location. Areas of medieval ridge and furrow survive as low earthworks or are visible on aerial photography and LiDAR around both Upper and Lower Radstone (see Volume 5: Appendix CH-004-014).

4.3.82 Radstone is surrounded by agricultural fields, predominantly arable, established by parliamentary enclosure. The Great Central Railway was extended to pass between Upper and Lower Radstone in the early years of the 20th century, but was closed in the 1960s. The line of this railway is recognised as a relict landscape in the Northamptonshire Historic Landscape Character Assessment³⁶.

4.3.83 The principal value of Upper Radstone lies in the historical and architectural interest inherent in the built fabric, character and appearance of the Grade I Church of St Lawrence and its relationship with the other historical buildings within the hamlet and its relationship with the elements of medieval landscape and medieval village earthworks that survive on the periphery of the settlement (NPBo97), especially on its western side and immediately adjacent to the church. Upper Radstone is also

³⁵ Northamptonshire Historic Landscape Character Assessment.

³⁶ Northamptonshire Historic Landscape Character Assessment.

presently under consideration by South Northamptonshire District Council to be designated as a conservation area.

- 4.3.84 Any buried archaeology associated with the development of the settlements at Upper and Lower Radstone through the medieval and post-medieval periods will also contribute to this value. Both Upper and Lower Radstone are identified as key (non-designated) sites in the Northamptonshire Historic Landscape Character Assessment³⁷.
- 4.3.85 The predominantly agricultural landscape in which Radstone lies is a result of post-medieval parliamentary enclosure. There has evidently been little change in the nature of the local land division immediately around the settlement since at least 1800.
- 4.3.86 Elements of the medieval landscape survive as earthworks, principally at Lower Radstone although ridge and furrow and some other village earthworks are visible to the south of Upper Radstone (NPB095). There is also a possibility that the park pale of the medieval hunting park at Greatworth extends into the area to the west of Upper Radstone and is preserved in the line of the footpath and track called The Worlidge.
- 4.3.87 Upper Radstone is isolated in a peaceful agricultural area and there is very little disturbance to the local sound environment.

4.4 Selected designated built heritage assets within the zone of theoretical visibility

- 4.4.1 The criterion for inclusion within this section is that the Proposed Scheme is assessed in the Impact Assessment Table in Volume 5: Appendix CH-003-014 as having a major or moderate adverse effect upon a designated asset which lies within the ZTV, but outside of the 500m study area. Descriptions and considerations of the significance of all designated assets within the ZTV can be found in the Gazetteer in Appendix 5: CH-002-014.
- 4.4.2 There are no designated heritage assets within the Newton Purcell to Brackley area which are located within the ZTV, but outside of the 500m study, that are deemed to have a major or moderate adverse effect as a result of the Proposed Scheme.

³⁷ Northamptonshire Historic Landscape Character Assessment.

5 Historic map regression

5.1.1 The analysis of the cartographic evidence for the study area has been integrated within the archaeological and historical baseline narrative (Sections 3 - 4) and in the historic landscape narrative (Section 6).

6 Historic landscape

6.1.1 The historic landscape character within the study area is predominantly one formed during the later 18th and early 19th century parliamentary enclosures. The landscape in this area is overwhelmingly rural, with occasional isolated farms. These complexes are generally a mixture of historic farmhouses and more modern industrial outbuildings and barns.

6.1.2 Within this post-medieval framework, aspects of the pre-existing medieval landscape survive, principally as areas of ridge and furrow and associated headlands indicating areas in which an open field system existed during the medieval period. Most of these can be associated with either the existing historic settlements at Newton Purcell (NPBo08), Mixbury (NPBo24), Westbury (NPBo42), Turweston (NPBo58) and Upper Radstone (NPBo89) or settlements that have since been deserted, such as at Lower Radstone (NPBo87).

6.1.3 Another aspect of the medieval countryside was the establishment of Royal and private forests and parks for hunting. Much of the study area south of the Great Ouse may formerly have been within the royal hunting forest of Bernwood and parts of the study area to the north of Brackley may have fallen within Whittlewood Forest. The layout of modern field boundaries and trackways between Radstone and Halse Grange, on the boundary between the Newton Purcell to Brackley study area (CFA14) and the Greatworth to Lower Boddington study area, could indicate that a former park of medieval date is situated in this area (discussed in the Greatworth to Lower Boddington study area (CFA15, GLBo03)). This could be related to the record of parkland at Greatworth in the Greatworth to Lower Boddington study area.

6.1.4 Many of the farmhouses and associated agricultural buildings in the area were built between the 17th and 19th centuries but it is generally buildings within the settlements of Newton Purcell (NPBo08), Finmere (NPBo11), Mixbury (NPBo24), Westbury (NPB-042), Brackley (NPBo56 and 057), Turweston (NPBo58), and Whitfield (NPBo71) that comprise the majority of this period's built heritage.

6.1.5 A number of outlying farmsteads in the study area are focussed around Grade II listed buildings of post-medieval date. These comprise Home Farmhouse at Shelswell (NPBo12), Widmore Farm (NPBo18) and Mixbury Lodge Farm (NPBo22).

6.1.6 Another 13 farmsteads in the study area are depicted on the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey (OS) maps of the 1880s. These are predominantly early 19th century farms established during the enclosure movements. These comprise Barleyfields (NPBo05) and Barleyfields Barn (NPBo09) farms at Newton Purcell, Warren Farm at Finmere (NPBo21), Grovehill Farm to the south of Westbury (NPBo46), Westbury Grove (NPBo48) and Rectory (NPBo52) farms between Westbury and Turweston, Versions Farm to the north-west of Turweston (NPBo69), Ilets Farm (NPBo70) and Coldharbour Farm at Lower Radstone (NPBo86) and Hall Farm at Upper Radstone (NPBo84).

6.2 Historic parks and gardens

6.3 Introduction

6.3.1 Another aspect of the post-medieval landscape was the creation of private parkland, often designed as pleasure grounds for the aristocracy and rising gentrified class. A single example is situated just outside of the study area at Evenley Hall Park. This is not a registered park or garden. Another (non-designated) designed landscape (NPB067) is located to the west of Turweston and is associated with Turweston House.

6.4 Selected historic landscape components

6.4.1 Within the broader tapestry of historic landscape in the study area, the following landscapes within 500m of the land required to construct the Proposed Scheme have been identified as having particular qualities with regard to historical legibility.

Newton Purcell enclosures (NPB094)

6.4.2 It is likely that many of the field boundaries in the Newton Purcell area date to the enclosure of the parish of Shelswell parish. This enclosure probably occurred under private agreement soon after 1679. A number of terriers³⁸ indicate that the medieval strip system within open fields was still extant at this date and two elements of this open field system survive to the north of Newton Purcell (NPB092) and around Barleyfields Barn Farm (NPB094).

6.4.3 Hedgerows on field boundaries within this historic landscape component may predate the parliamentary enclosures of the 18th and 19th centuries but only those on the parish boundaries with Barton Hartshorn (NPB001) and Finmere (NPB032) meet the archaeological and historical criteria of the Hedgerow Regulations 1997.

Upper Radstone landscape (NPNo97)

6.4.4 This historic landscape component comprises of the shrunken medieval settlement at Upper Radstone (NPB089) with its Grade I listed Church of St Lawrence and medieval village earthworks and the associated elements of surviving medieval ridge and furrow (NPB095 and NPB096).

6.4.5 This historic landscape component provides the immediate historic landscape context of the village of Upper Radstone and demonstrates clear historical legibility, coherence and time depth.

6.5 Important hedgerows

6.5.1 Six hedgerows (NPB001, NPB032, NPB036, NPB064, NPB081 and NPB082) that qualify as being historically important under the archaeology and history criteria of the Hedgerows Regulations 1997 No. 1160 lie within or extend into the land required for construction of the Proposed Scheme. All are hedgerows that follow parish boundaries.

³⁸ a written survey describing a property and its boundaries.

7 Archaeological character

7.1 Introduction

7.1.1 To determine the archaeological potential for the study area, it was sub-divided into archaeological character areas. These archaeological character areas are derived from a consideration of the current topography, geology and current land use of the area. From these factors the potential for recovery of archaeological remains is considered.

7.1.2 From these broad character areas, the landscape was further subdivided into archaeological sub-zones, which have allowed for a more in-depth understanding of the archaeological potential of the study area. The study area has been sub-divided into 32 archaeological sub-zones. A number of factors have determined the potential of these sub-zones to contain archaeological remains of significance. These factors include topography, geology, historic character and distribution of known archaeological finds, sites and assets. Modern land use is also considered.

7.2 Character areas

7.2.1 In terms of broad archaeological character zones, the study area is bounded to the south-east by the claylands of the northern Vale of Aylesbury and then straddles in turn northwards the Oolite dipslope with till, Oolite above the valley of the River Great Ouse, the valley of the River Great Ouse and the Oolite Uplands with till.

Archaeological character area 1: Oolite dipslope with till

7.2.2 This character area comprises the tail of the dipslope of the Oolite plateau that forms the Cotswolds through northern Oxfordshire and into Northamptonshire. The solid geology comprises limestones, mudstones and sandstones of the Jurassic Oolite. These limestones and sandstones are predominantly capped by Pleistocene till, which effectively extends the undulating claylands of the Vale of Aylesbury to the south onto the limestone massif.

7.2.3 The area has a gently undulating landscape trending to rise to the north-west and lies within the watershed between the catchments of the River Great Ouse to the north and the River Thame and River Thames to the south and east. The principal streams, including the Padbury Brook, drain northwards to the River Great Ouse.

7.2.4 The historic settlement pattern is one of nucleated villages on higher ground within a fieldscape mainly created by parliamentary enclosure with scattered copses. The land use is predominantly mixed agriculture with some plantation woodland. The area once lay within the northern margins of Bernwood Forest.

7.2.5 Generally this area has relatively poor archaeological visibility due to the lack of recent development, although investigations at Finmere Quarry (NPB019)³⁹ have identified prehistoric and Romano-British activity. The south-eastern edge of the character area

³⁹ Hart J, Kenyon D. and Mudd A., (2010), *Excavation of Early Bronze Age Cremations and a Later Iron Age Settlement at Finmere Quarry, North Oxfordshire*, *Oxonienia* LXXV.

is crossed by the supposed line of the Roman road linking Alchester with Towcester and there are a number of cropmarks of enclosures (NPB015; NPB016; and NPB020) that may represent later prehistoric colonisation of more marginal land over till. Investigations on similar claylands in the Midlands, including the Vale of White Horse, in Milton Keynes and Bedfordshire suggest that later prehistoric, Romano-British and early medieval activity will be present.

Archaeological character area 2: Oolite above the valley of the River Great Ouse

7.2.6 This character area comprises the flanks of the River Great Ouse where it is incised through the Oolite plateau as it loops past Brackley. The underlying geology comprises limestones, mudstones and sandstones of the Jurassic Oolite. These limestones are devoid of the till capping on the slopes overlooking the River Great Ouse although till does cap the slightly higher ground within the loop of the River Great Ouse between Westbury and Turweston. Where the limestones are not till covered, soils are generally quite light, well drained and easily worked. Gentle southerly facing slopes with good soils are present flanking the River Great Ouse to the south and west of Westbury and to the north of Brackley.

7.2.7 The historic settlement pattern is one of nucleated villages on higher ground within a fieldscape mainly created by parliamentary enclosure. The land use is predominantly mixed agriculture with arable predominant on the lighter soils where till is absent. Older closes with pasture are present around the villages of Westbury and Turweston.

7.2.8 Aerial photography undertaken for the National Mapping Programme has generated good results on the Northamptonshire side of the River Great Ouse to the north of Brackley. The National Mapping Programme has not yet mapped the Buckinghamshire side of the River Great Ouse and so cropmark sites are currently not so well recorded between Turweston and Westbury. Archaeological investigations to the north of Brackley (NPB074 and NPB076) and on the A43 bypass (NPB072 and NPB073)⁴⁰ have confirmed that many of these sites are late prehistoric and/or Roman in date and have also detected sites not visible as cropmarks. Relatively intensive prehistoric and Romano-British settlement activity is, therefore, present on the southerly facing slopes of the valley of the River Great Ouse to the north of Brackley and can reasonably also be expected to be present between Westbury (NPB042) and Turweston (NPB058).

Archaeological character area 3: valley of the River Great Ouse

7.2.9 The valley of the River Great Ouse is shallow, incised into the Oolitic plateau that extends the Cotswolds northward from Oxfordshire into Northamptonshire. The River Great Ouse drains eastwards to The Wash and loops from a north/south alignment onto an east/west alignment as it flows past Brackley. Sequences of limestone,

⁴⁰ Mudd, A., (2007), *Iron Age and Roman Settlement on the Northamptonshire Uplands: Archaeological work on the A43 Towcester to M40 Road Improvement scheme in Northamptonshire and Oxfordshire*, Northamptonshire Archaeology Monograph No. 1.

sandstone and mudstones of the Jurassic Oolite outcrop on the valley sides and the valley floor contains Holocene alluvium and peat.

7.2.10 The current land use is predominantly pasture land with some established and plantation woodland. Settlement is generally restricted to the higher slopes overlooking the valley.

7.2.11 Prehistoric and Romano-British settlement activity is present on the upper valley sides to the north of Brackley (NPB073, NPB074, NPB076 and NPB077) and to the south of Turweston (NPB059). Field systems associated with these may extend into the valley floor. Much early evidence could be masked by the build-up of alluvium and peat within the valley floor and colluvium on lower slopes.

7.2.12 There is evidence to the north of Brackley of a medieval and/or post-medieval management system in the valley floor (NPB063 and NPB066). This may be related to fishponds or for providing water to power a mill or mills at Turweston (NPB058). These features could also be part of a system of water meadows. There is a high potential that the valley floor will contain palaeoenvironmental sequences that will chart the local development of the Holocene environment and could also contain archaeological material such as evidence for river crossings, riparian activities (such as fish trapping, boats etc.) and the use of the river for ritual deposition.

Archaeological character area 4: Oolite uplands with till

7.2.13 This area is characterised by a relatively open and gently undulating landform overlying Jurassic Oolitic limestones and ironstones, which are largely capped throughout by deposits of glacial till and boulder clay. Generally there are good soils on areas where the capping of till is absent and in these areas aerial photography produces good results. Areas capped by till generally have poorer quality soils and aerial photography on these areas produces patchy results.

7.2.14 This area forms a gently incised watershed and interfluvium between the catchments of the River Great Ouse draining to the south and east and the River Cherwell draining to the west. The area appears to have been a frontier area between three tribal groupings (Catevalauni to the south and south-east, Corieltauvi to the north and north-east and the Dobunni to the south and west) in the later prehistoric period and again during the Anglo/Danish period when this watershed broadly defined the southern and western edge of the Danelaw in which Scandinavian rule became established.

7.2.15 As an interfluvium there is a good potential for the presence of Mesolithic to Early Bronze Age activity relating to movement between, and exploitation of, adjacent valley systems. To the south-west beyond the River Cherwell in the limestone districts of Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire there is good evidence for the establishment of late prehistoric and Romano-British settlement⁴¹ and especially for the establishment of villa estates. Cropmarks (NPB085, NPB088 and NPB090) suggest that late

⁴¹ Featherstone R. & Bewley, B., (2000), *Recent Aerial Reconnaissance in North Oxfordshire*, Oxoniensia LXV, Oxford.

prehistoric and Romano-British settlement is present in this area but evidence for villas is lacking. Surveys elsewhere in Northamptonshire suggest however that this lack of villas may be a consequence of the lack of archaeological activity⁴².

7.2.16 The area is now characterised by nucleated villages within a landscape generally created by relatively early private and parliamentary enclosure with some later amalgamation. Many of the field boundaries may date to the early 18th century (or even earlier) and there is good survival of hedgerows that may be of historic importance throughout.

7.3 Archaeological sub-zones

7.3.1 The archaeological sub-zones are presented in Table 1 from south to north. An indication of archaeological potential for each sub-zone is provided.

⁴² Young, C., Pers Comm (2012).

Table 1: Archaeological sub-zones

Number	Name	Topography	Geology/soils	Modern land use	Historic landscape character	Archaeology (from baseline)
1	Finmere Station	Embanked former railway and associated station	Cornbrash overlain by till and glacio-fluvial deposits	Demolished railway station with associated disused trackbed, sidings and road bridges	Former railway station with associated disused trackbed, sidings and road bridges	Archaeology probably removed/severely truncated by railway construction but railway remains (NPBo03 and NPBo04) survive including station house, road bridges and underground access and storage for the former station
2	Great Central Railway	Former railway line at grade	In succession crosses the Cornbrash, Forest Marble and White Limestone formations; all overlain by till.	Disused railway	Former railway	Archaeology likely to have been removed/severely truncated by railway construction but railway remains survive
3	Tail of dipslope (Boundary Farm)	Within an undulating landscape but here has a trend to a south facing slope overlooking the catchment of the Padbury Brook	Cornbrash overlain by till and glacio-fluvial deposits	Mixture of arable and pasture	Relatively early enclosure	Ground gently trending upwards with southerly aspect onto limestone plateau and crossed by presumed line of Roman road (NPBo06) between Towcester and Alchester. Scattered enclosures (NPBo15, NPBo16 and NPBo20) visible to aerial photography and known prehistoric site with some Romano-British activity at Finmere Quarry (NPBo19) and potential ring ditches at Finmere airfield (NPBo14).
4	Tail of dipslope (Newton Purcell and Barleyfields Farm)	Low ridge within undulating landform between the catchments of the Padbury Brook	Cornbrash overlain by till and glacio-fluvial deposits	Mixture of arable and pasture	Relatively early enclosure	Low ridge crossed by presumed line of Roman road (NPBo06) between Towcester and Alchester. Scattered enclosures (NPBo15, NPBo16, and NPBo20) visible to aerial photography and known prehistoric site with some Romano-British

Number	Name	Topography	Geology/soils	Modern land use	Historic landscape character	Archaeology (from baseline)
						activity at Finmere Quarry (NPB019) and potential ring ditches at Finmere airfield (NPB014. Medieval moated site at Newton Purcell (NPB007) and ridge and furrow between Newton Purcell and Barleyfields Farm (NPB092 and NPB093)
5	Newton Purcell	Low ridge within undulating landform between the catchments of the Padbury Brook	Cornbrash overlain by till and glacio-fluvial deposits	Historic settlement (hamlet)	Historic settlement (hamlet)	Settlement occupies the crest of a low ridge crossed by presumed line of Roman road (NPB006) between Towcester and Alchester. Moated site (NPB007) and medieval church within the hamlet (NPB008). Low ridge location overlooking catchment gives potential for the presence of archaeological remains
6	Finmere Quarry	Ground gently trending upwards with southerly aspect onto the limestone plateau	In succession Forest Marble and White Limestone overlain by till	Quarry	Quarry and fragmented pre-parliamentary enclosure	Rising ground with southerly aspect on plateau edge activity gives potential for the presence of archaeological remains, especially on the margins of till. Scattered enclosures (NPB015; NPB016; and NPB020) visible on aerial photography. Investigations ahead of quarrying identified Bronze Age, Iron Age and to a limited extent some Romano-British activity. This included potential Bronze Age urnfield and Iron Age linear settlement (NPB019). Activity shown to extend up to and beyond existing rail embankment and therefore continuing outside of the

Number	Name	Topography	Geology/soils	Modern land use	Historic landscape character	Archaeology (from baseline)
						area removed by quarrying.
7	Mixbury Plateau (Widmore Farm)	Very slightly undulating plateau	White Limestone overlain by till and glaciofluvial deposits.	Mixture of arable and pasture with some stands of plantation woodland	Modified parliamentary enclosure	Scattered enclosures visible on aerial photography. Reasonably good location for early activity, especially on margins of till. Immediately adjacent to the activity identified at Finmere Quarry (NPBo19) with ring ditches and other enclosures visible on aerial photographs on west side of old railway line to south of Widmore Farm.
8	Mixbury Plateau (Warren Farm)	Very slightly undulating plateau	White Limestone overlain by till and glaciofluvial deposits	Mixture of arable and pasture with some stands of plantation woodland	Modified parliamentary enclosure	Scattered enclosures visible on aerial photography. Reasonably good potential for archaeological remains, especially on margins of till
9	Mixbury plateau (Mixbury Lodge Farm)	Very slightly undulating plateau	White Limestone overlain by till and glaciofluvial deposits	Mixture of arable and pasture with some stands of plantation woodland	Modified parliamentary enclosure	Scattered enclosures visible on aerial photography (NPBo20). Reasonably good potential for archaeological remains, especially on margins of till
10	Mixbury	Low ridge within an undulating plateau adjacent to incised stream	White Limestone	Historic settlement	Historic settlement	Low ridge overlooking catchment of tributary of the River Great Ouse gives good potential for archaeological remains. Medieval settlement (NPBo24) with scheduled monument comprising the earthworks of Beaumont Castle (NPBo25) and a Medieval church
11	Valley at Hollow Barn (north facing slope at Tibbets Farm)	Relatively steep north facing slope running into a small valley incised into the plateau	White Limestone over Rutland Mudstone	Predominantly pasture with some arable	Late 19th century regular enclosure associated with the establishment of a	Scattered enclosures visible to aerial photography on plateau land (NPBo20) but north facing slope makes this location unlikely for later

Number	Name	Topography	Geology/soils	Modern land use	Historic landscape character	Archaeology (from baseline)
		east of Mixbury			planned estate village	prehistoric and later activity. The location is relatively typical for Mesolithic and early Neolithic streamside activity and possibly Bronze Age round barrows on upper slope/plateau margin
12	Valley at Hollow Barn (north facing slope at Hollow Barn)	Relatively steep north facing slope into a small valley incised into the plateau east of Mixbury	White Limestone over Rutland Mudstone	Mixture of pasture with woodland in valley floor and arable on higher slopes	Parliamentary enclosure	Scattered enclosures visible on aerial photography on plateau land (NPB020) but north facing slope makes this location unlikely for later prehistoric and later activity. The location is relatively typical for Mesolithic and early Neolithic streamside activity and possibly Bronze Age round barrows on upper slope/plateau margin
13	Valley at Hollow Barn (south facing slope)	Plateau and relatively steep south facing slope running into a small valley east of Mixbury. Plateau lies between this little tributary valley and the valley of the River Great Ouse to the north.	White Limestone over Rutland Mudstone	Arable	Modified parliamentary enclosure with some amalgamation into prairie fields	South facing slope and adjacent plateau next to Ouse Valley makes this location typical for later prehistoric and later activity. Scattered enclosures are visible to aerial photography on the plateau land (NPB020). The location is also relatively typical for Mesolithic and early Neolithic streamside activity and possibly Bronze Age round barrows on upper slope/plateau margin
14	Valley of the River Great Ouse (north facing slope near Westbury)	Relatively gentle slope with northerly aspect into the valley of the River Great Ouse	White Limestone overlain by glaciofluvial deposits and head	Arable	Modified parliamentary enclosure with some amalgamation into prairie fields	Adjacent plateau and opposite south facing slope would likely have better potential archaeological remains.

Number	Name	Topography	Geology/soils	Modern land use	Historic landscape character	Archaeology (from baseline)
15	Valley floor of the River Great Ouse	Flat floodplain	Rutland and Whitby Mudstones overlain by alluvium	Pasture with some plantation	Valley floor meadows	Valley floor has low potential for former settlement activity but does have palaeoenvironmental potential within floodplain alluvium
16	Fulwell	Flat valley floor and adjacent lower slope	Rutland Mudstone overlain by alluvium	Mixture of pasture farmstead, scrubby woodland and ponds	Medieval settlement	Earthworks of a medieval settlement (NPBo29) on the edge of the floodplain of the River Great Ouse. Palaeoenvironmental potential within floodplain alluvium
17	London and North-Western Railway	Former railway line	Predominantly follows lowest exposure of White Limestone	Disused railway	Former railway	Archaeology likely removed/severely truncated by railway construction but railway remains survive
18	Westbury	Occupying edge of a low ridge/plateau within a loop of the River Great Ouse	Successive (valley to plateau) exposures of Horsehay Sand, Taynton Limestone, Rutland Mudstone and White Limestone	Historic settlement	Historic settlement	Plateau edge with southerly aspect within loop of the River Great Ouse is a typical locality to find activity of all periods up to the medieval. Some disturbance to any archaeological remains will have been caused by building foundations
19	Valley of the River Great Ouse (south facing slope at Westbury)	Edge of plateau within loop of River Great Ouse with relatively steep southerly aspected slope into the valley of the River Great Ouse	Successive (valley to plateau) exposures of Horsehay Sand, Taynton Limestone, Rutland Mudstone and White Limestone	Mixture of arable and pasture	Modified parliamentary enclosure	Area lies at the edge of a salient of slightly higher ground within a loop of the River Great Ouse. Slope is not excessive so early activity cannot be discounted, although better placement would be on plateau to the north. No known sites on the HER, but potential can be extrapolated from sites recorded on the other side of the River Great Ouse in Northamptonshire. Some survival of low ridge and furrow

Number	Name	Topography	Geology/soils	Modern land use	Historic landscape character	Archaeology (from baseline)
20	Westbury/Turweston Salient	Plateau of higher ground within a loop of the River Great Ouse as it flows past Brackley	White Limestone and Forest Marble outcropping at edges of plateau but overlain by till and glaciofluvial deposits on higher ground	Arable on limestone exposures and predominantly pasture over till	Modified parliamentary enclosure	This is a typical locality to find activity of all periods up to the medieval. This could include Bronze Age round barrows and later prehistoric and/or Romano-British settlement activity. There is very little reported archaeology from this area apart from the Romano-British activity recorded from Turweston (NPBo58 and NPBo59) but this is almost certainly a result of there having been little in the way of archaeological work. The margin of valley of the River Great Ouse north of Brackley suggests that a similar density of archaeological activity as recorded there may also be expected here. Probability is highest on plateau margins where Limestones are not capped by till.
21	Turweston	Edge of plateau of higher ground within a loop of the River Great Ouse as it passes Brackley	Successive (valley to plateau) exposures of Horsehay Sand, Taynton Limestone, Rutland Mudstone and White Limestone	Historic settlement	Historic settlement	Plateau edge within loop of the Great Ouse is a typical locality to find activity of all periods up to the medieval. Some disturbance to any archaeological remains that are present will have been caused by building foundations

Number	Name	Topography	Geology/soils	Modern land use	Historic landscape character	Archaeology (from baseline)
22	Valley of the River Great Ouse (north facing slope at Turweston)	Relatively steep north facing slope into Ouse Valley	In succession (from valley to plateau) exposures of Whitby Mudstone, Tufa, Sharpshill Formation, Rutland Mudstone and White Limestone	Mixture of arable and pasture with pasture predominant on valley side	Modified parliamentary enclosure with early enclosures around and associated with Turweston	Northerly aspect makes this a relatively unlikely location for settlement activity but potential still exists. Upper slope can be considered typical for Mesolithic and Early Neolithic activity on the edge of a valley and for the location of Bronze Age barrows. A ring ditch (barrow) is present in a similar location to the south of Turweston
23	Valley floor of the River Great Ouse at Turweston	Flat floodplain	Whitby Mudstone overlain by alluvium and Peat	Pasture and meadows	Floodplain meadows	Valley floor has low potential for early settlement activity but does have palaeoenvironmental potential within floodplain alluvium, including presence of peat indicated by the British Geological Survey (BGS). Aerial photography and LiDAR also suggest possibility there may be a water meadow system present within the valley floor, and there is a slight possibility that buried remains of further mill(s) could also be present.
24	Turweston Parkland	Flat floodplain and adjacent lower valley slope with easterly aspect	In succession from valley floor Whitby Mudstone overlain by Horsehay Sand and alluvium	Pasture and recreational parkland with regenerating woodland	Former designed landscape associated with Turweston House	Valley floor has low potential for archaeological remains of settlement but does have palaeoenvironmental potential within floodplain alluvium. Possibility of currently unrecorded medieval mills
25	Valley of the River Great Ouse (south facing slope at Versions Farm)	Relatively steep south facing slope into Ouse Valley	In succession from valley floor Whitby Mudstone, Horsehay Sand, Sharpshill	Pasture and regenerating woodland to the south of Versions	Apparently early post-medieval regular enclosures around and to south of	Southerly aspect makes this a quite likely location for archaeological remains. Upper slope is a typical location for Mesolithic and Early

Number	Name	Topography	Geology/soils	Modern land use	Historic landscape character	Archaeology (from baseline)
			Formation, Taynton Limestone, Rutland Mudstone and White Limestone	Farm, arable to the north	Versions Farm and modified parliamentary enclosure to north	Neolithic activity on the edge of a valley and for the location of Bronze Age barrows. Cropmark of an enclosure has been recognised just to the south of Versions Farm
26	Valley edge of the River Great Ouse	Edge of plateau and interfluvе overlooking the valley of the River Great Ouse	Exposures of Sharphill Formation and Blisworth Limestone	Road corridor	Modified parliamentary enclosure	Top of a south-east facing slope overlooking the valley of the River Great Ouse on local exposure of limestone make this a good location for archaeological remains. This is confirmed by the almost uninterrupted belt of discoveries extending north from Brackley and along the A43 (NPB072; NPB073; and NPB074). These include evidence for Iron Age settlement at Brackley Fields (NPB074) and Romano-British activity, including a probable Romano-Celtic temple and burials, near Sundale (NPB073). Construction of the A43 has removed much of this potential but areas to west of the road can still be considered to have high potential
27	Radstone Plateau at Fox Covert	Top of a south facing slope overlooking the valley of the River Great Ouse	Exposures of Sharphill Formation and Blisworth Limestone with some capping by till to north	Predominantly arable	Modified parliamentary enclosure	Top of a south facing slope overlooking the valley of the River Great Ouse on a local exposure of limestone makes this a good location for archaeological remains. This is confirmed by the almost uninterrupted belt of discoveries extending north from Brackley and along the A43 (NPB072, NPB073 and NPB074). These include evidence for Iron Age settlement activity at

Number	Name	Topography	Geology/soils	Modern land use	Historic landscape character	Archaeology (from baseline)
						Brackley Fields (NPB074) and Romano-British activity including possible Romano-Celtic temple and burials near Sundale (NPB073) Cropmarks of settlement sites are also evident near Fox Covert (NPB077). This area has not been developed in the same way as the bypass and archaeological survival will be high
28	Radstone Plateau at Hall Farm	Edge of gently undulating plateau land within the rivers Great Ouse/Cherwell/Nene interfluvium	Blisworth Stone capped by till	Mixed arable and pasture	Modified parliamentary enclosure	Iron Age settlement activity has been identified at Brackley Fields and cropmarks of settlement are also evident near Hall Farm (NPB076) and to the east of Radstone (NPB085, NPB087 and NPB088). Excavated evidence for Middle Iron Age settlement immediately to the south (NPB083). Density of activity may not be as intensive as along the River Great Ouse valley side but potential is still high
29	Radstone Plateau between Coldharbour Farm and Radstone	Incised stream valley within gently undulating plateau land within the rivers Great Ouse/Cherwell/Nene interfluvium	In succession from valley floor Whitby Mudstone and Horsehay Sand capped by Alluvium, Taynton Limestone, Rutland Formation and Blisworth Limestone capped by till	Predominantly arable	Modified parliamentary enclosure with some amalgamation into prairie fields	Head of a tributary stream of the River Great Ouse is a good location for early activity. Cropmarks indicate presence of likely later prehistoric/Romano-British settlement to the east of Radstone (NPB085 and NPB088)
30	Great Central Railway	Former railway line	Predominantly	Disused railway	Former railway	Archaeology likely

Number	Name	Topography	Geology/soils	Modern land use	Historic landscape character	Archaeology (from baseline)
			Blisworth Limestone capped by till			removed/severely truncated by railway construction but railway remains survive
31	Radstone	At the head of an incised stream valley within gently undulating plateau land within the rivers Great Ouse/Cherwell/Nene interfluvium	Predominantly Blisworth Limestone capped by till	Historic settlement and associated enclosures	Historic settlement and associated enclosures	Head of a tributary stream of the River Great Ouse is a good location for archaeological remains. Cropmarks indicate the presence of probable later prehistoric/Romano-British settlement activity to the east of Radstone (NPBo88). Medieval village remains and earthworks at Radstone (NPBo89).
32	Radstone Plateau (north of Radstone)	Gently undulating plateau land within the rivers Great Ouse/Cherwell/Nene interfluvium. Relatively flat with a trend to gentle south facing slope	Predominantly Blisworth Limestone capped by till	Predominantly arable	Modified parliamentary enclosure with some amalgamation into prairie fields	Typical locality for Mesolithic and early Neolithic exploitation of an interfluvium with some potential for later periods too. Most likely scattered enclosures rather than the dense belt of activity adjacent to the River Great Ouse. Cropmarks of such enclosures evident north of Radstone (NPBo90).

8 Analysis and research potential

8.1 Analysis of understanding

8.1.1 Human activity through all periods in the study area has largely been concentrated in the principal valley systems, specifically within and immediately adjacent to the valley of the River Great Ouse. The River Great Ouse could have been used as a natural corridor for movement along its length, but also have formed a natural boundary. The valley would also have provided significant resources from the riparian environment. As an area of watershed, the higher ground may also have provided access between the valley system of the River Great Ouse and those of the River Tove (feeding to the River Nene) and the River Cherwell (feeding to the River Thames).

8.1.2 A number of archaeological sites have been identified as cropmarks on aerial photographs and/or during archaeological investigations within the land required for construction of the Proposed Scheme. These comprise:

- the presumed line of a Roman road (NPBo06) linking the towns of Alchester and Towcester passes through Newton Purcell. Activity of Romano-British date can reasonably be expected to be concentrated in close proximity to this line;
- prehistoric and Romano-British activity at Finmere Quarry (NPBo19). Although much of this evidence has already been removed within the quarried area and likely by construction of the Great Central Railway, cropmarks indicate the site extends to the west of the railway and in this area will be relatively undisturbed;
- a system of water management features (NPBo63 and NPBo66) are present in the valley floor of the River Great Ouse to the north of Turweston (GLBo58). These may be part of a post-medieval leats to manage water for a water meadow system and/or be related to a mill or mills at Turweston. The valley floor is also known to contain alluvium and peat that has a high potential to contain palaeoenvironmental evidence that will chart the environmental development of the valley of the River Great Ouse throughout the Holocene. There is also a possibility that waterlogged deposits and evidence for such activities as river crossings, fishing and ritual deposition into the river could be present;
- an intensive area of late prehistoric and Romano-British archaeological activity has been identified through archaeological investigations along the corridor of the A43 to the north of Brackley (NPBo72 and NPBo73). Although probably removed within the footprint of construction of the new Brackley by-pass, evidence can reasonably be expected to extend to the west of the A43;
- a series of sites can be identified by cropmarks on aerial photographs and between Fox Covert and Radstone (NPBo77, NPBo85 and NPBo88). They are likely to be of late prehistoric and Romano-British date;
- earthworks and the ridge and furrow field system associated with the shrunken medieval village at Radstone (NPBo89); and

- a site identified by cropmarks to the north-west of Radstone (NPBogo). This is likely to represent activity of late prehistoric or Romano-British date.

8.1.3 Remains of structures (NPBoo4) associated with the Great Central Railway also lie within the land required for construction of the Proposed Scheme at Newton Purcell. These include the foundations of Finmere Railway Station, two iron bridges carrying the railway over the A4418 and the underground station approach and storage associated with the station. There will also be evidence for the former sidings and stock pens.

8.1.4 Within the valley of the River Great Ouse and its tributaries there will be a potential for waterlogged and other deposits of palaeoenvironmental interest. Archaeological deposits may also be relatively deeply buried in these localities by the build-up of alluvium (and peat) in the valley floors and colluvium on the lower slopes.

8.1.5 The geology of the area generally favours the identification of sites through cropmarks visible to aerial photography. Northamptonshire has been part of the National Mapping Programme and cropmark sites are relatively well represented on the Northamptonshire side of the River Great Ouse, especially where limestones outcrop and are not covered in till. The National Mapping Programme has yet to be undertaken in Buckinghamshire and cropmark evidence on the Buckinghamshire side of the River Great Ouse is not as well recorded, although sites can reasonably be expected to be present on the higher ground flanking the River Great Ouse between Westbury and Turweston.

8.1.6 Archaeological investigations along the line of the A43 and elsewhere to the north of Brackley have confirmed the presence of relatively intensive activity of later prehistoric and Romano-British date, including sites that were not initially recognised as cropmarks.

8.1.7 There is considered to be potential for encountering further unrecorded archaeological assets and features throughout the study area, particularly of late prehistoric/Roman date, but also including the potential for evidence for Mesolithic and Neolithic exploitation of the interfluvium between the headwaters of the rivers Thame, Great Ouse and Cherwell.

8.1.8 Investigation of these sites has the potential to considerably refine and improve the current understanding of the archaeology within the area where the counties of Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Northamptonshire meet and to apply this within overarching regional and national perspectives.

8.1.9 The historic landscape character within the study area is predominantly one formed by private and parliamentary enclosure during the post-medieval period. Within this framework there is some survival of earlier landscapes, principally the remains of medieval ridge and furrow indicating where areas of open field once existed around settlements.

8.2 Research potential and priorities

8.2.1 The Proposed Scheme has the potential to increase our archaeological knowledge and understanding of the locality. Many research questions can best be formulated at

either a scheme wide or at a county/multiple community forum area level. These will draw heavily on the regional and period research frameworks, which have been prepared with support from English Heritage^{43, 44}.

Research Questions

This section presents research questions which are specific to the heritage assets, either known or suspected, within the Newton Purcell to Brackley study area. The archaeological character areas which are likely to contain the potential to address these questions are identified.

Early prehistory

- can knowledge about the earliest hominin activity in the region be improved and can the hypothesis that there is no pre-Levallois activity north of the Vale of Aylesbury be tested (all archaeological character areas)?
- can palaeoenvironmental information help to shed light on the Palaeolithic development of the landscape with particular emphasis on recording the formation of till deposits on the plateau areas and the creation of the valley system of the River Great Ouse (all archaeological character areas)?
- can a deposit model for the valley of the River Great Ouse in the Brackley area be established? This would help to clarify the environmental context and date(s) for the development of alluvium, peat and colluvium within the valley floor. What can a deposit model tell us about the widespread clearance of woodland and potential periods of regeneration (archaeological character area 3)?
- can our understanding of how the interfluvium between the Great Ouse, Thame and Cherwell river systems was used during the prehistoric period be refined? Can evidence be recovered that will help establish patterns of subsistence and mobility within and across an important intra-riparian upland and its margins (all archaeological character areas)?
- did the local rivers, and particularly the River Great Ouse, act as a focus for ritual/ceremonial activity and if so what is its date and how did it develop over time? Are there early crossings of the River Great Ouse? Is there any evidence to indicate whether the River Great Ouse was used for the ritual deposition of artefacts (archaeological character areas 2 and 3)?

Late prehistory

- what is the nature of the enclosures that lie on the tail of the dipslope between Newton Purcell and Brackley. When and why did enclosed settlements of this type develop during the late prehistoric period, what are their functions, and do they fit into a system of settlement hierarchy? How long were they in use for and did the forms and functions change over time (archaeological character

⁴³ Oxford Archaeology and Buckinghamshire CC et al., (Ongoing), *Solent Thames Research Framework: A framework for Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight*, Oxford Archaeology, Oxford.

⁴⁴ Knight, D., Vyner, B. and Allen, C., (2012), *East Midlands Heritage: An Updated Research Agenda and Strategy for the Historic Environment of the East Midlands*, Buxton Press, Buxton.

area 1)?

Late prehistory/Romano-British

- What is the nature of the prehistoric and Romano-British activity identified in and around Sundale (NPB073) and what dates was the possible temple enclosure functioning between and what were its cult associations?

Medieval

- what is the system of leats and drainage ditches that are present within the valley of the River Great Ouse to the north of Turweston (NPB063 and NPB066)? Are they related to any other features such as fishponds, mills and/or water meadows within the flood plain (archaeological character area 3)?
- what was the date and processes of settlement decline/shrinkage at Radstone (NPB089) (archaeological character area 4)?

Modern

- are there any outlying military structures associated with Turweston airfield (NPB054): ie. anti-air defences, airfield defence features (pill boxes, battle HQ etc.), shelters, magazines, hardstandings for example (archaeological character area 2)?

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